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BURIAL CUSTOMS OF THE ROMANS

There is no other event in the pulsating life of this world so dominating as death. From the earliest times, when the members of the primitive clan gathered about their dead clansman to raise the communal song of lament¹, nothing else in life has had so profound an effect upon the imagination of man, filling him with dread and fear of unknown powers, and stimulating him to formulate for himself a philosophy of life which must include and face death. The study of funeral customs, in which are reflected the speculations and the beliefs of man concerning death, should, if the student lays the emphasis on their relation to primitive religion, bring us much of value.

If we consider the funeral customs of the classic peoples, Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans², we shall find on the one hand that they differ considerably from those of to-day, and on the other that they agree remarkably, for the most part, among themselves. These southern peoples were in general much more emotional, or much more ready to show their emotions, than are the more serious-minded northern Germanic races³, from which we are descended. They are also much closer to a primitive state of religion, in which fear rather than piety determines the ritual of burial

¹See Francis B. Gummere, *The Beginnings of Poetry*, 219-251 (New York, Macmillan, 1901). Professor Gummere discussed extant examples of the Corsican *socero*, or lament for the dead, a form somewhat similar to the Roman *nenia* and the Irish *caoine* ('keenings'). He chose to study the lament because he believed that this form, more than any other, retained certain communal elements which, according to his theory, were the distinguishing features of primitive poetry. Whatever the merits of his general thesis may be, he was certainly right in his choice of the ritual of burial as being most likely to retain primitive and traditional features.

²This paper relies for its statements of fact largely on a work by Hugo Blunmer, entitled *Die Römische Privataltertümer* (Munich, Beck, 1911). See the discussion entitled *Bestattung und Grabmäler*, 482-511. From Blunmer's references to Latin literature I have cited only those which are most important or are intrinsically interesting. I have added some illustrative material from other articles on special aspects of the subject, and from the fields of archaeology and comparative religion, references to which will be found in the notes. For a comprehensive bibliography (to the year 1896), see the article *Funus*, by Edouard Cug, in *Daremberg et Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, 2, 1490 (Paris, Hachette, 1877-1919).

The English reader will find the best account of the subject in a chapter by F. H. Marshall, entitled *Private Antiquities*, in J. E. Sandys, *Companion to Latin Studies*, 179-184 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1913), an admirable condensation of the subject. But no references are given. The same remark may be made about the more elaborate account in H. W. Johnston, *The Private Life of the Romans*, 312-331 (Chicago, Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1932), and to the briefer treatment by W. B. McDaniel, *Roman Private Life*, 186-197 (Boston, Marshall Jones, 1924) (New York, Longmans, Green, and Company, C. K.). The latter article, however, is valuable for its references to modern survivals of ancient custom.

The present article makes no claim to any great measure of originality. It does, however, present various items not elsewhere brought together, e. g. the citations in the text from Marco Polo and the Philadelphia Public Ledger, and the references in notes 1, 5, 11, 19, 25a. I am also responsible for the general remarks in the introductory paragraphs, the conjecture on the origin of the use of the *imagines*, the deduction from the evidence given in note 27, and the argument in note 29.

³This fact Tacitus noted, *Germania* 27 *Lamenta ac lacrimas cito, dolorem et tristitiam tarde ponunt. Feminis lugere honestum est, viris meminisse.* Our Germanic ideal of manliness forbids display of emotion.

and makes it much more elaborate than is usual with us. Hence comes also their essential agreement among themselves in matters of detail. In only a very few things shall we have occasion to note that Roman practice differed from the Greek; these will be items added to the list of things which show that the Romans, with the *gravitas* of their national character, tended to adhere closely to minutiae of ritual which were originally dictated by magical motives, and were always felt as religious duty. The Greeks, with more imagination, although they began with much the same body of ritual, gradually threw some of it off, and advanced farther on the road away from magic toward a more enlightened religion.

With both the Greeks and the Romans burial was considered a religious duty, to be performed, even in the case of executed criminals, by the nearest relative. Otherwise the ghost of the dead man would wander about with a baneful influence on the lives of those who had denied him his due reception to the underworld. Even the stranger who chanced upon a corpse was bound to give it at least symbolic burial by casting over it three handfuls of earth. This rite was also performed symbolically for the man whose body had been lost in a foreign land or at sea, and a *cenotaph*, or empty tomb, was erected in his honor and all due observances were paid to it. References are abundant to the importance of burial as a duty to the dead; so also are references to the pathetic lot of the unburied⁴. The *Antigone* of Sophocles is built around *Antigone's* heroic determination to fulfill the duty she feels of burying her brother, at least symbolically, in face of the penalty decreed by the king for so doing. In Rome, failure to complete the rites of burial had to be atoned for by the annual sacrifice of a sow, *porca praecidaneae*. Until this was done, the family was *funesta*, 'tainted with death'. Even in the case of cremation the old religious feeling required at least symbolic burial by means of a finger cut off (*os resectum*) and interred before the body was burned.

No less religious in motive were the customs preceding the actual burial. Although the form of the ceremony and the amount of pomp varied with the circumstances of the family and with the historical period, yet certain forms were always observed by all who were in any way conscious of their religious duty. At the moment of death, the body of the dying man was lifted off the bed and placed on the ground (*depositum*), and his last breath was caught with a kiss by his nearest relative. Both customs were religious in motive: at

⁴Compare e. g. Vergil, *Aeneid* 9.213-215, 10.402, 557-560; Ovid, *Tristia* 3.3.29-84. (Ovid is writing about the unhappy fate which awaited him, of burial in a foreign land without the due ceremonies he would receive at home). For the Greek beliefs see Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*, translated from the eighth edition by W. B. Hillis, 162-174 (New York, Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1925). (For a brief notice of this work see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 23.159. C. K.).

the moment of death the body should be returned to the earth from which it came, while the breath was thought of as the soul, which should be caught by a kiss to prevent its wandering about⁵. The eyes of the deceased were then closed, and a loud cry (*conclamatio*) was raised by those who were standing near. These persons called upon the deceased by name, with the idea of calling him back to life, or, rather, of proving him dead⁶, a precaution sometimes necessary, as we may see if we remember the story which tells how the physician Asclepiades restored to life a person just about to be cremated⁷.

Next, preparations were made for the laying-out of the body, an office of the women of the family, or of the *pollinctores*, a special class of men, probably slaves, supplied, from the Temple of Venus Libitina⁸, by the *libitinarii*, the Roman undertakers. The body was washed with warm water. It was dressed in a toga⁹ (unless the man had been too poor to own a toga). The body of a magistrate or an Emperor was arrayed in the man's robes of state. His seal-ring was placed on his finger. The body of a woman was decked in the woman's customary finery. Next the body was placed (*collocatum*) on the funeral couch (*lectus funebris*, in the atrium of the house¹⁰), with its feet toward the door; a coverlet, often very gorgeous, was placed over the body, in such a way as to leave the face uncovered. Tapers, candles, and lamps were placed about the couch¹¹, and the coverlet was strewn with garlands and flowers; the fire on the hearth was quenched, and a coin was placed in the mouth of the deceased to serve as his fare over the Styx¹². A branch of cypress or spruce, always a symbol of death, was broken off,

and was placed before the door of the house, to warn the passer-by, especially a priest, of the danger of pollution. The laments of the women, begun at the *conclamatio*, were continued at intervals throughout the period before burial. The lying-in-state of a deceased Roman is well illustrated in a relief from the tomb of the Haterii family¹³.

The time of the funeral was indeterminate. It came very soon after death in the case of a poor man, somewhat later (usually seven days or more after death) in the case of a man whose family was rich enough to provide the necessary means of preventing decomposition of the body. In fact, the description given above, and those that follow, apply only to the well-to-do; the poor man had to be content with very little pomp. The religious feeling was simply that a man should have in death the services to which he had been accustomed in life, since his existence was thought to continue in some form under the earth. This feeling even the poor could satisfy, and every effort was made, through the formation of Funeral Societies (*collegia funeraticia*¹⁴), survivals of which are in existence to-day among fraternal organizations and among poorer classes of people, to secure a decent, if not pompous, burial. The chief object of the Societies was to supply a permanent resting-place for the ashes of their members. Such a resting-place they found in the *columbaria* (so called from their resemblance to dovescotes), large vaults¹⁵, with their lower story underground, with square or semicircular niches in parallel rows about the walls. In these niches the urns were placed, with small inscriptions to mark them. The *columbaria* were built mostly by associations of slaves or freedmen of a certain family. Sometimes, however, they were built as a business venture; in such cases niches were rented out. The *columbaria* usually contained a place where the bodies were burned (*ustrina*). Very little expense was put on the previous ceremonies: unguents for slaves were forbidden by a law of the Twelve Tables; the body was borne on an insignificant litter (*sandapila*), by a low class of pall-bearers (*vespillones*). For those who could not afford even this kind of burial there were pits (*puticuli*), on the Esquiline¹⁶, into which the bodies of the poor or of condemned criminals were unceremoniously cast.

The handbooks all make distinctions between private funerals¹⁷, conducted by the family of the deceased, and public funerals, conducted by the community or the State. It is probable, however, that the ceremonies differed but little no matter who paid for them. The funeral was often proclaimed by a herald (it was then called *funus indictivum*), and the general public was in-

⁵See Francis Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, 50 (Yale University Press, 1922). <For this work see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 20, 168-169, C. K.>. A curious parallel may be found in Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 4, 198 (London, Macmillan, 1912): "In Nias the eldest son usually succeeds his father in the chieftainship. But if from any bodily or mental defect the eldest son is disqualified for ruling, it is necessary that the son upon whom his father's choice had fallen shall catch in his mouth or in a bag the last breath, and with it the soul, of the dying chief. For whoever catches his last breath is chief equally with the appointed successor". This custom is not found among the Greeks (according to Ch. Lévain, in Daremberg-Saglio, 2, 1370), who, nevertheless, did conceive of the soul as spirit.

⁶See Vergil, *Aeneid* 1, 210; Servius on *Aeneid* 6, 218; Propertius 4, 7, 21-24 at *mibi non oculos quisquam inclamavit euntis: unum impetrassem te revocare diem*. Hence, in Terence, *Eunuchus* 348, *conclamatus* = "it's all over with me".

⁷See Apuleius, *Florida* 10.

⁸Venus Libitina was an old goddess of death, who had under her care all matters pertaining to death and funerals, including the registry of funerals. Compare Suetonius, *Nero* 30.

⁹Juvenal 3, 171-172 *Pars magna Italiae est, si verum admittimus, in qua nemo togam sumit, nisi mortuus*.

¹⁰Not in the *vestibulum*. The use of the *vestibulum* in the case of Augustus (Suetonius, *Augustus* 100) was exceptional.

¹¹This custom has survived into modern times. In the Middle Ages accounts of the vast numbers of candles lit at the funeral are a commonplace. The very name *hearse* comes from the resemblance of the elaborate framework bristling with candles, under which the bier was laid during the mass, to an inverted harrow (compare Latin *hirpes*, French *herse*).

¹²This was undoubtedly a Greek custom: see Ch. Lévain, *Daremberg-Saglio*, 2, 1371. It has been doubted that it was a Roman custom: see W. A. Becker, *Gallus*, translated by Frederick Metcalf, 598 (London, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1888). Becker felt that the references to the custom in Juvenal 3, 267 and Propertius 5, 11, 7 may be only echoes of the Greek way of thinking. But the abundant finds, since Becker's day, in tombs of all periods seem to prove that it existed among the Romans. See E. Cuq, *Daremberg-Saglio*, 2, 1388. <This matter is discussed also in Ludwig Friedländer, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte des Roms*, 3, 755. In the translation by various authors, of the seventh edition of this work, under the title, *Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire* [New York, Dutton, undated], the matter appears at 3, 298-299. See also Joachim Marquardt, *Das Privatleben der Römer*, Zweite Auflage, von August Mau, 348-349 (Leipzig, Hirzel, 1886). C. K.>.

¹³See Blümner, Figure 75 (= Theodor Schreiber, *Atlas of Classical Antiquities*, Edited for English Use by W. C. F. Anderson, [London, Macmillan, 1895], Plate C, Figure 8; compare Plate XCV, Figures 2, 6, 9, where examples of the Greek *πρόθεος* are shown).

¹⁴See J. P. Waltzing, *Étude Historique sur les Corporations Professionnelles chez les Romains*, . . . (Four volumes, Louvain, Peeters, 1895-1900). The best literary evidence is Horace, *Sermones* 1.8.9 <cadavera> *conservus villi portanda locabat in arca*.

¹⁵Compare Schreiber (see note 13, above), Plate XCIX, Figure 10; Plate C, Figure 6.

¹⁶This was true until Maecenas built his gardens over the *puticuli*. After that time, the very poor were similarly buried farther out, beyond the gate: see Porphyrio on Horace, *Sermones* 1.8.14.

¹⁷The word *funus* properly = 'the carrying-out of a body in a procession': see Horace, *Sermones* 1.6.43 *concurrantque foro tria funera*. The etymology of the word is uncertain.

vited to attend, in the words of a very old formula¹⁸. Opposed to this was the *funus plebeium, tacitum, traliticium*. The special expression *funus acerbum* was applied to the funerals of young children and boys who had not yet assumed the *toga virilis*. For every man whose family could afford it, a funeral procession was formed, with as much pomp as possible¹⁹, usually under the care of the *libitinarii*, who supplied the necessary participants. This procession in historical times always took place during the day (it took place at night only in the case of poor persons and of children), although Julian, attempting (Epistula 77) to revive what he cited as an old custom, ordained that all funerals should be held before day-break, that is, at night. The procession of bearers, participants, and friends who wished to accompany²⁰ the bier assembled outside the house of the deceased, and was marshalled by *dis-signatores*, supported by lictors in black costume. At the head of the train (*pompa*) went music: flutes, trumpets, and horns²¹. With the music, and all through the train, went bearers of torches, indispensable at a solemn funeral, as at a wedding²². Next came *praeeficae*, hired mourning-women, singing the *nenia*, or dirge. The *nenia* was originally a kind of folk-poetry comparable to the Homeric *θρῆνος* or *γῶος* (see Iliad 24.720-776), or to the Corsican *vocero*. In Rome it remained folk-poetry, and was consequently despised by Roman literary men, although Suetonius (Augustus 100) states that at the funeral of Augustus a *nenia* was sung by a special chorus of noble youths and girls. This would seem to imply a feeling for a certain dignity in the form, but no Horace ever tried his hand at it. In the lack of any literary treatment, we can best judge the form from the parody in Seneca, Apocolocyntosis 12. It is unfortunate for us that Rome had no Simonides and Pindar to do for the *nenia* what they did for the *θρῆνος*²³.

In an especially gorgeous procession, for instance that of an Emperor, there would be dancers and players (*mimi*), one of whom took the part of the deceased himself, wearing his mask, imitating his bearing and his habits, and by means of all sorts of jokes lending a *macabre* humor to the funeral²⁴. Sometimes these performances were called *ludi*²⁵, 'frolics', 'jests', and the performance was continued after the funeral oration. The most important part in the procession, however,

was taken by the bearers of the *imagines*, or masks of the family ancestors, prepared by the *pollinctores* during the lying-in-state of the body. The *imagines* were ordinarily kept in closets in the atrium of the house, in an arrangement intended to form a family tree. They were taken out to accompany the funeral of one of the descendants of the men whom they represented²⁶. At the funeral they were put on by men dressed to represent the originals of the masks (this was the case in Polybius's day, at least). The wearers were preceded by *fascēs*. When the wearers reached the Forum, they sat about the *rostra* on ivory curule chairs, just as the originals had done in life. The origin of this custom, which is confined to the Romans²⁷, is probably to be found in the ancient belief that the spirits of the dead were an especial care to their family, and had to be propitiated, and is therefore to be associated with the worship of the Lar and the ancestral Genius. The ancestors, represented by the wearers of the masks, naturally had an important part to play in the process by which one was added to their number. Later on, when their original religious significance had been forgotten, the *imagines* became only a feature of family pride as they were preserved in the house, and of ostentation as they were displayed at the funeral²⁸.

After the bearers of the *imagines* came men carrying objects representing the deeds of the deceased, such objects as trophies, models of towns captured by him, tablets, inscriptions, civic crowns, etc. Directly before the bier walked lictors, in black dress, with *fascēs*, corresponding in number to the rank of the deceased, and any slaves who had been freed by his will; the latter wore the *pilleus*, the cap of freedom. Slaves so garbed may be seen very clearly in the Haterii Relief. They owed, it seems, their master this last service, if they did not actually bear the *lectus*, or bier (sometimes called *feretrum*). Next in the procession came the bier, borne by sons of the deceased, other near relatives, friends, or the freed slaves, as the case might be. From several passages²⁹ we learn that the life-like attitude of the body as it reclined on the *lectus*, an attitude often shown in reliefs, was not a mere convention of the artist. Behind the *lectus* came relatives and friends of the deceased, dressed, as in the days preceding, in the universal dark clothing of mourners (*lugubria*³⁰), and giving other manifestations of grief in the true southern lavishness of emotion. Again the deceased was apostrophized in lamentation.

¹⁸The formula may be reconstructed, from Varro, De Lingua Latina 7.42, Festus 304 (Lindsay), and the parody in Terence, Phormio 1026, as follows: *Ollus Quiris leto datus est. Exsequias <name of citizen, dative case> ire cui commodum est, iam tempus est.*

¹⁹The reader may remember an amusing illustration in Du Maurier's novel, Trilby: there an endless funeral procession winds through the streets of Paris—in the rain. On the luxury attendant upon Roman funerals see L. Friedländer, Roman Life and Manners 2.219-216, 4.279-284 (see note 12, above).

²⁰Hence came the term *exsequiae*, used of a funeral. Compare the formula given in note 18, above.

²¹This is illustrated by a relief, from Amicitium. See Blumner, Figure 76 (= Sandys [see note 2, above], Figure 4).

²²Hence came the expression *inter utramque faciem*: see Propertius 4.11.46.

²³See H. de la Ville de Mirmont, Études sur l'Ancienne Poésie Latine, 361-366 (Paris, Fontemoing, 1903).

²⁴Compare Suetonius, Vespasian 10: *in funere Favor, archimimus, personam eius <= Vespasiani> ferens imitansque, ut est mos, facta et dicta vivi, interrogatis palam procuratoribus quanti funus et pompa constaret, ut audit sestertium centiens, exclamavit centum sibi sestertia darent, ac se vel in Tiberim proicerent.*

²⁵See Plautus, Mostellaria 427-428 *Ludos ego hodie vivo praesenti hic seni faciam, quod credo mortuo numquam fore.*

²⁶Polybius (6.53) gives a very careful and detailed account of the *imagines*, which were evidently to him a striking feature of a Roman funeral. Dio Cassius, describing the funeral of Augustus (56.34), says that the ancestral masks of all prominent families of Rome, from Romulus down, were carried in the procession (even the *imago* of Pompey was included).

²⁷Death masks of thin sheets of gold have been found in Mycenaean graves: see Sir Arthur Evans, The Shaft Graves and Bee-Hive Tombs of Mycenae, 4-14, Figures 2-7 (London, Macmillan, 1929). Their origin and use, however, are still matters of conjecture. One might compare the mummy portraits painted on wood, found in Egyptian graves.

²⁸Compare Pliny, Naturalis Historia 35.4; Juvenal 8.19-20 *Tota licet veteres exornent undique ceras atria, nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.*

²⁹See e. g. Dio Cassius 61.7.4. Velleius Paterculus remarks (2.4.6) on the strangeness of the corpse of Scipio, which was *relato capite*.

³⁰Under the Empire women seem to have worn white: see Statius, Silvae 3.3.3; Julian, Epistulae 56. Death was always, and probably always will be, associated with black; compare Iliad 24.94, and many passages from that time on.

In the case of a distinguished person, or of any one whose deeds merited extolling, the procession went not directly to the tomb, but to the Forum, where it halted at the *rostra*. A son or a close relative then mounted the platform, and delivered the funeral oration (*laudatio funebris*), praising, often in highly exaggerated terms, as was, indeed, only natural, the deeds not only of the deceased but also of his ancestors, whose *imagines* were present to add dignity to the occasion, and doubtless to have their feelings soothed by these flattering tributes to their memory²⁹. Again the *nenia* was sung, both before and after the oration, and the *mimi* and the dancers performed.

Where and how was the body disposed of? The evidences derived from literature are fairly unanimous. A law of the Twelve Tables required that the body, whether burned or inhumed, should rest finally outside the city walls. Only a few exceptions to this law were made, in the case of famous men and their descendants, to whom was allowed, as a mark of honor, the privilege of burial within the city. The prohibition of burial within the city came probably from practical motives, the desire for sanitation and the fear of fire, for, although archaeology has discovered the earliest Roman graves in the Forum, still it is clear from these graves that there was even then a common burial-ground³⁰. Cicero and Pliny the Elder also thought that inhumation, rather than cremation, was the more ancient form³¹. This is true enough of the earliest Aegean civilization (there are no signs of cremation in the early Cretan graves), and of Etruria, where inhumation was usual, but archaeological discoveries indicate that at Rome both practices were in use from the very earliest times. Cremation was the rule during the Republic and the early Empire for all except the very poor and for children; from the second century of our era the number of *sarcophagi* increases, until finally Christian influence put an end to cremation³². In historical times the tombs were outside the city. The ruins of them may still be seen along the roads leading out from Rome. Others, in a better state of preservation, may be seen at Pompeii.

Accordingly, the funeral procession would then move outside the city to the appointed tomb, for even in the case of cremation the place where the body was burned (*ustrina*) was near the tomb, if it was not actually in the tomb. The body, still on the *lectus*, was placed

on the pyre (*rogus, pyra*), built originally of smooth wood in the form of an altar, which was later very large and pretentious³³. With the body other things were burned, such as incense (for obvious reasons), gifts of food³⁴, and articles which the deceased used and loved in his life, clothes, ornaments, implements, weapons, and, as in the case of the son of Regulus, even pet animals (see Pliny, *Epistulae* 4.2). The underlying thought here is that the deceased needed these things in death as in life. To this belief we owe a large part of our archaeological knowledge of the private life of the ancient peoples, through the finds that have been made in tombs. The custom has disappeared under a Christian theology of a heaven which supplies every want. It was, however, and still is, very common among 'heathen' peoples. Marco Polo, in his travels through the Orient, observed with great curiosity the customs of the Buddhists, who burned their dead. He more than once records his impressions. Compare the following passage³⁵:

When any one dies the friends and relations make a great mourning for the deceased, and clothe themselves in hempen garments, and follow the corpse, playing on a great variety of instruments and singing hymns to their idols. And when they come to the burning-place, they take representations of things cut out of parchment, such as caparisoned horses, male and female slaves, camels, armour, suits of cloth of gold (and money), in great quantities, and these things they put on the fire along with the corpse, so that they are all burnt with it. And they tell you that the dead man shall have all these slaves and animals of which the effigies are burnt, alive in flesh and blood, and the money in gold, at his disposal in the next world.

The tendency at Rome as well as in Greece was always toward great extravagance in the quantity and the value of the objects burned with the body, so that the tendency had to be checked by prohibitions repeated from the law of the Twelve Tables³⁶.

When all was ready, one of the near relatives, or one of the friends, of the deceased, with averted face, held the torch to the pyre. The tinder and the oils caught fire quickly, and, as the flames mounted higher, the song of lamentation was raised again; there were other manifestations of grief. When the pyre had burned down, the ashes were quenched with water or wine, the bones were gathered, washed with wine and milk, dried on a linen cloth, and laid with ointment and perfume in an urn. This was the end of the ceremonies for all except the immediate family; the others were purified by the sprinkling of water, and were allowed to depart. The urn, usually a simple clay *olla*, was then carried to the tomb, and there laid

²⁹Cicero (*Brutus* 62) and Livy (8.40), with whom many modern scholars agree, felt that much of the falsification in the traditional history of Rome was due to the *laudationes*, and to the boastful *tituli* placed under the *imagines*. For the literary history of the *laudatio* see Fr. Vollmer, *Laudationum Funerarium Romanorum Historia et Reliquiarum Editio*, in *Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie*, Supplementband 18 (1892), 445-528.

³⁰Blummer (498, note 13 [see note 2, above]) discounts the assertion of Servius on *Aeneid* 5.64, 6.152 (which is echoed by Isidorus, *Origines* 15.11), to the effect that the early custom was to bury men in their own houses, by saying that this is probably a deduction from the worship of the Lares. But the dead ancestor certainly would be associated with the Lar and with the Genius of the house. He may once have been buried in the house, until practical reasons, due to the growing community, warned otherwise. That the Romans did want to have their dead in communication with the living is shown by the grouping of the tombs about the roads and by the frequent appeals in the epitaphs to the passer-by.

³¹Compare Cicero, *De Legibus* 2.56-57; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 7.187 *ipsum cremare apud Romanos non fuit veteris instituti: terra condebantur*.

³²Compare Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 7.7.5 *licet urendi corpora defunctorum usus nostro saeculo <400 A. D.> nullus sit*.

³³We have no actual description of an interment; in that case the ceremonies here described were probably omitted, except the deposit of the urn, or of the body, in the tomb.

³⁴Hence came the proverbial expression for extreme audacity, *cibum e flamma petere*, 'to snatch a meal from the flames of the pyre'; see Terence, *Eunuchus* 491.

³⁵See *Travels of Marco Polo*, Edited by G. P. Parks, 226 (London and New York, Macmillan, 1927). Note his references to hired mourning women (46); other descriptions of funerals (68-69, 80); the statement that burial or cremation was forbidden inside the walls of Peking (136); and other matters noted on pages 196, 204, 210, 274, etc. The passage quoted in the text is from the description of the great city of Kinsay (Kingsue, now Hangchow).

³⁶Compare Cicero, *De Legibus* 2.60. From this passage, by the way, we glean one bit of evidence for the existence of ancient dentiatry: gold, says Cicero, might not be burned with a dead body, except in the case of a man whose teeth were joined by gold.

away in its appointed place, marked by an appropriate tablet (corresponding to our gravestone), which gave the facts concerning the deceased, and recited praise of his virtues, with some carved illustration. The last farewells were said³⁶, and the final religious ceremony (*feriae denicales*) took place. This involved the sacrifice of a sow (*porca praesentanea*), to hallow the grave, and of a wether, to purify the house and the family. A sacrificial meal (*silicernium*), of which the deceased was supposed to partake, was held in or near the tomb.

We have described the *columbaria* built for the burial of poor persons, freedmen, and slaves. The rich man would want a tomb for himself or his family. This was often very elaborate, as may be seen from many surviving examples at Rome and at Pompeii³⁸. Since on the one hand the tombs were considered as the eternal home of the family ancestors, and on the other hand as the center of the cult of the dead for the survivors, they were usually laid out like a house, with a door and several chambers, not only to hold the urns or the *sarcophagi*, but also to provide chapels for the worship of the dead, with their portraits, and store-rooms for the apparatus necessary at the memorial meals to be described below, and for the care of the tomb and the adjacent ground. At Pompeii there is even a *triclinium funebre*, at which the spirit of the deceased might supply his bodily needs, and the family hold its memorial meals with him.

Since the soul of the deceased was thought to need provision for various wants in its *post mortem* existence, the ground about the tomb was often laid out as a garden, where the spirit might wander and enjoy itself in its own bit of the Elysian Fields. This custom, of course, survives to-day in the decoration of tombs with flowers, although now we think of the flowers merely as decorations fitting to our sense of piety and our memory of the dead.

The first period of deep mourning lasted for eight days (nine days, according to the Roman inclusive method of reckoning) after the burial. On the eighth day a sacrifice to the Manes of the deceased, followed by a memorial meal (*cena novemdialis*), was held at the tomb. Sorrow was then laid aside, so that later writers (e. g. Tertullian, *De Testimonio Animae* 4) reproach men with having forgotten their ancestors in the desire to fill themselves on this occasion with good things liquid and solid. At this time the funeral games (*ludi*) were held³⁷. Such games probably descended from an old Etruscan custom of human sacrifices at the grave, from which the Romans derived gladiatorial combats in general^{37a}. The explanation of all this is to be found

in the belief that the departed spirit needed the blood of living animals, if not of human beings, to support its existence³⁸. Memorial meals also took place on other occasions, whenever sacrifices were made to the dead. This custom goes back to immemorial antiquity; it was especially followed in Egypt. After this *sacrificium novemdiale* the family was free to resume its normal activities, although women often mourned for much longer periods, during which they wore dark clothing and refrained from wearing ornaments.

Finally, something must be said concerning the sacrifices made to the spirits of the dead on the anniversary of their birthdays, or on special festivals³⁹. The tombs were built in such a way that, wherever it was impossible to make a libation directly upon the urn, libations of milk, oil, wine, and solid food, cakes, etc., could always be made, through an arrangement of tubes leading from the exterior of the monument to the urns with their perforated covers. Such offerings were called *inferiae*. The motivating belief which shines through them, that the spirit of the departed needs and appreciates such services, is still in existence among non-Christian peoples. The following news item is from the Philadelphia Public Ledger of March 25, 1930:

Residents of Philadelphia's Chinatown went yesterday to Lower Merion Cemetery and honored their dead with much ceremony. It was the occasion of the annual observance of the feast of She Yee, a festival so old that the Chinese themselves have lost trace of its origin. Each year at this time food and dainties are carried to the cemetery and placed on graves that the spirits may have sustenance during their journeys through the spirit world. It is the Chinese belief that on this occasion the spirits hover closest to the earth. Roast pig, rice cakes, wine, and cigarettes were taken to the cemetery in taxicabs and placed on the graves. Joss sticks were lighted and placed at the head and foot stones.

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REVIEWS

Rome and the Romans: A Survey and Interpretation. By Grant Showerman. New York: The Macmillan Company (1931). Pp. xxi + 643. 200 Illustrations (Without Distinguishing Numerals). \$5.00¹.

Professor Showerman's book, *Rome and the Romans*, is addressed, as the author intimates in a preliminary note (vii), to an unusually wide circle of readers. It "is meant especially", he says, "for students of the literature and history of Rome. . . <it> is addressed to all readers desiring acquaintance with the people whose character and institutions are at the foundations of our

³⁶Catullus, in his beautiful elegy (101) on the death of his brother, imagines himself to be fulfilling this duty at his brother's tomb (or was it a cenotaph?) in the Troad: see 10, *atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale*. Compare Vergil, *Aeneid* 11.97-98, and many similar expressions inscribed on the gravestones; see Bucheler, *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* (Part 2 of the *Anthologia Latina*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1895), 1308.1, 424.1, 489.9, etc. These expressions suggest that this rite helped to give the dead man new life.

³⁷Petronius (71) has Trimalchio give an amusing description of the tomb he has prescribed for himself in his will; details of the relief to be sculptured thereon are given.

^{37a}The *locus classicus* for the Greek custom is *Iliad* 23, which is imitated in Vergil, *Aeneid* 5. There is evidence for at least one historical Roman counterpart of these games: see the *Didascalia* to the *Adelphoe* of Terence; *Acta Ludii Funebris Quos Lucio Aemilio Paulo Pecere Q. Fabius Maximus P. Cornelius Africanus*.

³⁸See P. Monceaux, in *Daremberg-Saglio*, 4.1385-1386.

³⁸Cumont (in the work named in note 3, above), 51-52, cites other examples of the custom, both among the classic peoples and among Christians. He might have added the very significant passage in the *Odyssey* (11.23-43), where the spirits of the dead come eagerly to drink of the pool of blood; after they drink they are resuscitated enough to be able to speak to Odysseus. Cumont connects the scratching of the cheek by mourning women with this same belief.

³⁹One such occasion was the *Parentalia*, in February. For full commentary on this festival, with parallels from folk-customs of other peoples, see Sir James G. Frazer's recent edition of the *Fasts of Ovid*, 2.431-438 (London, Macmillan, 1929).

¹There is also an "Educational Edition", listed at \$2.40. The only differences that I have observed are (a) in the binding, which is less sumptuous in the cheaper edition, and (b) in the margins of the pages, which are smaller in the latter edition.

modern culture. . . . To some members of this audience, the style of the book may seem repellent, as the reader has a vague, and not altogether pleasant, sensation of being 'talked down' to, particularly in the earlier chapters. But perhaps Professor Showerman has kept an eye open to the probability that the majority of those whom he addresses will be found among the ranks of third and fourth year College students, and the average undergraduate—though 'twere death for him to acknowledge it—is extremely fond of being talked down to.

The book possesses the invaluable merit of having been composed by a scholar whose long and frequent periods of residence in Italy have thoroughly familiarized him with the country, its ancient remains, and the partial survivals of its early institutions in modern Italian society. Students of the Classics will be pleased to observe the strong emphasis that he puts on the 'rediscovery' of many of these institutions in recent times. He covers an unusual range of subjects, as the length of the <Table of> Contents (ix-x)² testifies, and he goes far beyond the limits set to the stereotyped handbook on Roman life. The illustrations are numerous, excellent in quality, and well adjusted for the proper illumination of the text. But it is unfortunate, I think, that the present location of the various monuments and works of art is not more often indicated. It is unfortunate, too, that the illustrations are without distinguishing numerals.

In exploiting such an extended series of themes, it is difficult for the redactor, whoever he may be, to introduce much in the way of novelty. Professor Showerman may therefore be freely pardoned if he has failed to bring forth much that is new, at least to the experienced student of Roman affairs. It is not necessary to read very far into Rome and the Romans to satisfy oneself that the author is temperamentally conservative. In historical matters he sides with Mommsen and his day; in dealing with the narrower aspects of Roman private life he draws largely upon Tucker³ and Johnston⁴.

²The Contents are as follows: Part I. Rome and its Meaning (3-39); Eternal Rome (3). I. Italy To-day (4-8). II. Rome To-day (9-13). III. The Rise of Ancient Rome (14-20). IV. The Rise of the Roman State (21-28). V. Ancient Rome and Modern Times (29-39). Part II. The Roman (43-147): The Roman (43-44). VI. The City in Which he Lived (45-53). VII. How he Looked (56-64). VIII. The Society in Which he Moved (65-75). IX. The House in Which he Lived (76-88). X. His Childhood and Early Training (89-99). XI. His Later Training (100-111). XII. The Women of his Family (112-123). XIII. What he Ate and Drank (124-136). XIV. How he Spent the Day (137-147). Part III. Living Rome (151-433): Living Rome (151-153). XV. The Roman Career (154-165). XVI. The Senator (166-173). XVII. The Voter (174-180). XVIII. The Lawyer (181-193). XIX. The Teacher (194-202). XX. Letters and the Arts (203-215). XXI. The Doctor (216-224). XXII. The Money-Maker (225-233). XXIII. The Common Man (234-250). XXIV. The Farmer (251-266). XXV. Roman Portraits (267-279). XXVI. The Worshiper (280-298). XXVII. Roman Holidays (299-307). XXVIII. The Theater (308-319). XXIX. The Races (320-332). XXX. The Gladiators (333-351). XXXI. The Baths (352-365). XXXII. In Lighter Vein (366-382). XXXIII. Satire and its Targets (383-404). XXXIV. A Dinner with the Newly Rich (395-404). XXXV. The Criminal (405-417). XXXVI. The Roman Dead (418-433). Part IV. Greater Rome (437-587): Greater Rome (437). XXXVII. The Spread of Roman Civilization (438-452). XXXVIII. The Army (453-468). XXXIX. Mare Nostrum (469-484). XL. By Land and Sea (485-502). XLI. The Roman Law (503-522). XLII. On the Southern Border (523-544). XLIII. Roman Spain (545-556). XLIV. On the Northern Border (557-571). XLV. The Coming of Christianity (572-582). XLVI. Eternal Rome (583-588): Chronology (589-592); Books <on Roman life> (593-595); Annotations (597-610); Index (611-643). ³T. G. Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul* (New York, Macmillan, 1910). ⁴H. W. Johnston, *The Private Life of the Romans* (Chicago,

It is doubtful if the harshest critic of Professor Showerman's book will be able to deny its essential soundness and the good judgment of its author, though it may be that specialists will have somewhat to say regarding particular features that fall within their own field. There is no doubt that some sections of the book are decidedly superior to others. Of particular merit, I feel, is the chapter on gladiators and the diversions of the arena (333-351). The analysis of the situation is masterly—one on which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to improve.

It would be impossible for me (a student of Greek archaeology) to attempt to discuss the work in detail. But certain points appear to me, as a layman merely, to call for attention when a second edition is demanded. Some of these are matters of controversy; others are 'faults escaped' pure and simple. I would mention the following (each comment is preceded by the number of the page on which the matter under discussion is to be found).

11—In the mention which is here made of the Wall of Aurelian, there is no indication that use has been made of Mr. Richmond's epoch-making work⁵ on the fortification. Can it be that Professor Showerman's book had gone to press before the appearance of Mr. Richmond's work?

60—Why is not the credit given to Hadrian for reviving the style of the full beard and bushy locks?

66-67—The youthful inquirer is likely to be led, through the very condensed statements here, to confuse the tribal assembly with the centuriate assembly.

71—Why are freedmen as a class designated here as *liberti* rather than as *libertini*?

72—The expression 'the Tironian Notes' is not a happy rendering of *Notae Tironianae*.

80—Professor Showerman states that the Alexander Mosaic at Naples "contains 17,000 pieces" of stone. There is surely a bad error here. Pfuhl, who ought to know the truth of the matter, says that it is composed "auf etwa anderthalb Millionen" pieces. Can it be that the printer has accidentally dropped three noughts from an intended 1,700,000?

204—In the words "the Second Punic War of Naevius. . ." there is a slip; read 'The First Punic War'.

225—The opening sentences of the page are misleading. The *sestertius* was more valuable than the *as* (not "larger" than the *as*).

244—Professor Showerman is wrong in asserting that the institution of apprenticeship went out of use a century ago. It is by no means obsolete at the present time.

306—For "the Gregorian feature <of the calendar> is not quite universal" read '... is by no means universal'.

Scott, Foresman and Company, 1903). <For a review of the revised edition [1932] of this work see below, in the present issue of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. C. K.>

⁵Ian A. Richmond, *The City Wall of Imperial Rome: An Account of Its Architectural Development from Aurelian to Nares* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1930).

⁶E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen* 2.757 (Munich, Bruchmann, 1923); compare his *Masterpieces of Greek Drawing and Painting*, translated by J. D. Beazley, 92 (New York, Macmillan, 1926). <For a notice of this book see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 21.110. C. K.>

378—"...To have the American willingness to laugh and to start a laugh requires a well-fed body and a mind that is free from apprehension and full of confidence..." Who will agree with this chauvinistic dictum?

413—In speaking of the Tullianum Professor Showerman remarks that "The visitor to the Tullianum... can hardly fail to reflect on the scantness of this prison of two chambers..." Here "scantness" is probably a misprint for 'scantiness'. But some other expression, such as 'limited size', would be better.

466—In the answer to the question why Rome's military system continued, from generation to generation, to show such amazing efficiency, it is strange to find no mention of one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of the contributing causes—the employment of a *castra*.

482—The old, and surely untenable, view of the method of propulsion of ancient galleys is here set forth anew.

483—It is utterly incredible that the Romans should have had 150,000 men afloat at the battle of Ecnomus in 256 B. C.

537—Few students of art will agree that the unearthing of "the Venus of Cyrene..." was "the most important sculpture discovery of recent times".

557—Professor Showerman makes a strange geographical error in asserting that the Wall of Hadrian followed the same line as the modern border between England and Scotland. At no point do they coincide; at their eastern ends they are sixty or seventy miles apart.

565—Recent studies⁷ have shown that the Antonine Wall in Scotland was abandoned about A. D. 197, not, as Professor Showerman's statement would imply, a century later.

567—The turrets on Hadrian's Wall are hardly of "frequent occurrence". Actually, there are two to each Roman mile.

The inclusion of a chapter treating of Roman Britain is altogether praiseworthy, but the author has failed to keep in touch with the great array of writings on the subject that has appeared in the last decade. Archaeology has moved very rapidly in England of recent years, and its advance has made havoc of a fair number of Professor Showerman's views.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

A. D. FRASER

The Private Life of the Romans. By Harold Whetstone Johnston. Revised by Mary Johnston. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company (1932). Pp. 430¹. Frontispiece, 326 Figures, 2 Maps. \$2.24.

It is seldom that a distinguished scholar—particularly a classical scholar—is privileged to leave behind him a son or a daughter whose interest in the father's

field of study is sufficiently strong to impel him or her to attempt to revise his publications after his demise, and who is at the same time competent to execute the task efficiently.

For nearly a generation, the late Professor H. W. Johnston's book, *The Private Life of the Romans* (Chicago, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1903), has occupied an extremely prominent position among the handbooks of Roman private antiquities current in English-speaking countries. During this period, various discoveries, mainly of an archaeological nature, have cast new light on many of the old problems involved in this subject of inquiry. Hence, Professor Johnston's textbook was gradually becoming antiquated in parts, and ran the risk of being discarded in favor of more recent publications. But in March, 1932—twenty-nine years subsequent to its first appearance—there was published a new and revised edition of the work, bearing the name of Professor Johnston's daughter, Professor Mary Johnston, of MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois, herself a competent and experienced Latinist and a frequent contributor to *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*.

As the old edition has been known so long and so widely, I propose, in this review, to speak only of the alterations and the additions that appear in the new edition.

The edition of 1932 has gained considerably over that of 1903 in attractiveness of appearance. The cover is new and tasteful, and the paper and the printing show a marked improvement. The pages have been slightly increased in size, thus providing wider margins, while the printed area of each page remains the same as in the older edition. The earlier illustrations were largely drawings. Miss Johnston has replaced most of these with reproductions of photographs, which have resulted, in almost every instance, quite satisfactorily. Her scrupulous care in matters of detail is well exemplified in her treatment of the illustration of the Ludovisi Gaul of the Museo Della Terme (Fig. 30, old edition; Fig. 62, new edition). For the old picture, itself a photograph, she has substituted a new photograph which reveals the group to much better advantage on its present lowered pedestal. Some of the old illustrations which were unnecessarily large have been reduced in size.

One finds, on examination, that the original and the new paragraphs keep pace numerically till § 409 is reached; thereafter they follow separate courses to the end of the volume. The earlier and larger section of the book, which comprises 304 pages of the old and 335 of the new edition, has been subjected to the fewest alterations. Here and there a little is excised or a little added, but the increased number of illustrations is

⁷The evidence for this is collected by R. G. Collingwood, in his book, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*, 84-85 (London, Methuen, New York, Lincoln MacVeach, The Dial Press, 1930). ⁸Reference may be made also to Sir George Macdonald, *Roman Britain 1914-1928*, and R. G. Collingwood, *Roman Britain* [both works were published by the Oxford University Press, in 1932]. C. K. >
⁹The contents of the book are as follows: Preface to the Original Edition (1-2); Preface to the Revised Edition (3); Contents (4); List of Illustrations (5-13); Introduction (13-26); I. The Family

(27-33); II. Roman Names (34-56); III. Marriage and the Position of Women (57-75); IV. Children and Education (76-97); V. Dependents, Slaves and Clients, Hospites (98-131); VI. The House and its Furniture (132-175); VII. Dress and Personal Ornaments (176-202); VIII. Food and Meals (203-237); IX. Amusements (238-302); X. Travel and Correspondence. Books (303-327); XI. Sources of Income and Means of Living. The Roman's Day (328-352); XII. Farming and Country Life (353-366); XIII. Town Life (367-374); XIV. Burial Places and Funeral Ceremonies (375-394); XV. The Roman Religion (395-404); XVI. The Water Supply of Rome (405-407); Books on Rome and Roman Life (409-412); Index (413-430).

largely responsible for the additional bulk. Some portions have been to a great extent rewritten; thus the treatment of the toga (161-166, old, 179-185, new) has been revised completely in the light of Miss Wilson's recent and illuminating study². There are to be discerned various other small, but not unimportant, corrections and alterations introduced from the full-flowing source of archaeological research. Furthermore, the text itself—the punctuation, phrasing, etc.—has been carefully scrutinized, and where necessary altered to conform more closely to the standards of taste current at the present day. In illustration of this, I may quote the opening sentence of § 114, first from the old, then from the new, edition:

In these Grammar Schools, Greek as well as Latin, great stress seems to have been laid upon elocution, a thing less surprising when we consider the importance of oratory under the Republic. . . .

In the Grammar Schools, both Greek and Latin, great stress seems to have been laid upon elocution, a fact not surprising when we consider the importance of oratory under the Republic. . . .

Generally speaking, one may recognize a real improvement in these minor alterations of the original diction. Occasionally, whole sentences are transposed or are transferred from one part of a paragraph to another.

Divers additions are made to the original work. We find the chapters of the two editions running hand in hand through Chapter XI. Then two intercalary chapters, XII. Farming and Country Life (353-366), and XIII. Town Life (367-374), make their appearance. They are followed by the twelfth (and closing) chapter of the first edition. Miss Johnston adds, finally, chapters on The Roman Religion (395-404: a strange lack in the earlier work) and The Water Supply of Rome (405-407).

From the point of view of the statistician, the following observations may be made. The number of pages is increased from 344 to 430—an increase of 25%. The number of paragraphs is increased from 438 to 502—an increase of 15%. The number of illustrations is increased from 205 to 327—an increase of 60%.

In addition, we now find two identical intra-cover charts of ancient Rome, and two colored maps, one of Italy, one of the Roman Empire—all extremely welcome supplements.

The new illustrations, and most of the old that have been reproduced, bear improved sub-titles. Thus, Figure 34 of the first edition, a rough drawing, was thus described: "Coin, Showing the Pilleus". The same illustration in the new edition (Fig. 72) appears as a good photograph of an impression of a coin of similar type with the following words subscribed: "Pilleus. On coin of 42 B. C., now in the British Museum, London". This sort of thing is destined to be of much service to the intelligent student.

The set of references to secondary sources formerly preceding the text of each chapter is augmented and revised. More of the older authorities might well

have been weeded out. But the list has been brought up to date by the inclusion of very recent works, even to the work entitled *Rome and the Romans*, by Professor Showerman³, published in the autumn of 1931.

As a final addition may be noted a good bibliography (409-412) which includes all works, most of which are specialized studies⁴, mentioned in the book.

One may without hesitation describe this new edition of *The Private Life of the Romans* as a sound and scholarly revision of a very good book.

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A. D. FRASER

CLASSICAL WEATHER LORE OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

(Continued from page 192)

According to the ancients, no animal is burned by a bolt without being rendered lifeless by it. The parts struck are colder than the rest of the body²⁹⁹. In the dead bodies of poisonous animals worms do not generate, but, if they are struck by lightning, maggots appear in their bodies in a few days, since lightning consumes the poison³⁰⁰.

We are told by Aristotle³⁰¹ that thunder during incubation addles eggs. We, too, say that thunder and lightning addle eggs³⁰² and we have other beliefs that are similar.

If it thunders in February goose eggs will not hatch³⁰³.

If it thunders while ducks are sitting, the eggs will not hatch³⁰⁴.

If it thunders heavily while a hen is sitting, it will kill the chickens³⁰⁵.

In antiquity many things were placed in hatching straw to prevent eggs from being spoiled. Pliny³⁰⁶ mentions iron nails and earth from a plow; Columella³⁰⁷ recommends iron nails, heads of garlic, and branches of laurel. A modern prescription is as follows. "Cross two nails in the nest of a goose and thunder can not spoil the eggs"³⁰⁸.

Some animal weather seers are specialists in recognizing the approach of thunderstorms. There is a thunder-snake "marked similarly to a rattlesnake, which . . . is supposed to foretell thunderstorms"³⁰⁹. The thunderfish is "a European loach which burrows in the mud at the bottom of streams and ponds and is supposed to foretell the occurrence of thunderstorms by swimming about in the water"³¹⁰.

²⁹⁹Grant Showerman, *Rome and the Romans, A Survey and Interpretation* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1931). <This work is reviewed above, in this issue of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. C. K.>

³⁰⁰Quite properly, William West Mooney's book, *Travel Among the Ancient Romans* (Boston, Richard G. Badger, 1920), is not so much as mentioned. But it is not so easy to understand the omission of Amedeo Maiuri's work, *Pompeii* (Novara, Istituto Geografico de Agostini, 1929), a sumptuous and at the same time popular work.

³⁰¹Pliny 2.145. ³⁰²Seneca 2.31.2.

³⁰³De Animalibus Historia 6.2.569 a. ³⁰⁴Thomas 1799.

³⁰⁵Thomas 2413. Compare *Journal of American Folklore* 4 (1891), 121: "If it thunders on Sunday, goose eggs will not hatch".

³⁰⁶Thomas 2698. See also 2689-2693. ³⁰⁷Thomas 2697.

³⁰⁸Pliny 10.152.

³⁰⁹Columella 8.5.12. See THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.103, first column.

³¹⁰Lyle Saxon, *Old Louisiana*, 346 (New York, The Century Company, 1929).

³¹¹Panny D. Bergen, *Animal and Plant Lore* (Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, 7 [1899], 62, No. 702).

³¹²Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language (1930), under Thunderfish.

²Lillian M. Wilson, *The Roman Toga* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1924).

THUNDER AND VEGETATION

Examples of the way in which some forms of plant life exercise protective powers against thunder and lightning were given in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 17. 108²²¹, but popular ideas about the influence of thunder and bolts upon vegetation are not less interesting.

Popular lore regarded thunder as both a generative and a fertilizing agency. So strong was this feeling that truffles, which were said to grow after thunderstorms, were called *κεραύνια*²²². Theophrastus, as quoted by Athenaeus²²³, says that mushrooms grow when fall rains and terrible thunderings occur, especially when there are thunderings, which are the more immediate cause of their growing.

In the *Moralia*²²⁴ of Plutarch there is a long inquiry into the reason why mushrooms are thought to be produced by thunder. It is regarded as probable that, when lightning and thundershowers descend forcibly with a great deal of warmth and spirit into the caverns of the earth, the ground is moved thereby, and knobs and tumors are formed like the wens or the kernels produced in our bodies by heat and noxious humors²²⁵.

Some advanced the explanation that thunder split the earth by using the air as a wedge, and that the crevices thus made directed mushroom pickers where to look for mushrooms. From this belief grew the idea that thunder engendered mushrooms²²⁶. It was believed, too, that mushrooms had some antithetical powers that saved them from being blasted by thunder²²⁷.

Ancient husbandmen thought that vegetation was especially fertilized by thundershowers²²⁸, a belief which has a modern counterpart in the saying that beans shoot up quickly after thunderstorms²²⁹. One theorist, named Agemachus, argues that waters which fell with the bolts became generative from the heat commingled with them, since they were rendered mild and gentle and fit to enter the pores of plants, where they were assimilated²³⁰.

Not far from the Academy at Athens there was an altar to Zeus Kataibates, who was called Morios also, from the *moriae* that grew there²³¹. The reference is to the olives propagated from the sacred grove on the Acropolis. According to Miss Jane Harrison²³², the identification of Zeus and Morios indicates a belief that Zeus, the god of thunder and rain, fertilized the earth and brought forth the sacred olives. Arnobius²³³

explains that the pagan story of the union of Jupiter and Ceres is an allegory in which Jupiter is the nourishing rain and Ceres the earth. This is a very easy explanation for a Christian to make, as may be seen from the words of Jeremiah, quoted near the beginning of this paper: "When he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens..." Vergil²³⁴ would have agreed with this idea, for he says that, when Jupiter strikes Athos or Rhodope or lofty Ceraunia, ingeminant Austri et densissimus imber.

The reason for the association of thunder with the growth of vegetation is quite obvious. Rain and thunder frequently come together. Long droughts, which call attention to the need of rain, are often broken up by thunderstorms. Jupiter in his capacity as Tonans had to be appeased by the sacrifice of a stranger in order to end a nine-year drought in Egypt²³⁵. Weather-makers of antiquity who wished to bring rain not infrequently imitated thunder and lightning²³⁶.

The following description, by G. Macdonald²³⁷, of a Greek coin is pertinent in this connection:

In the center of the field of the coin... is a rock, on which sits Zeus *Tétrios* (Jupiter Pluvius) enthroned. He holds a thunderbolt in his left hand, while from his right a shower of rain descends upon the head of the recumbent divinity of the mountain.

We find a still longer weather sequence in a Cretan distich, according to which God gathers the clouds thunders, and rains²³⁸.

Another deity who was regarded by some of the ancients as the cause of rain is Rhea. It was doubtless because rain was so often accompanied by thunder and lightning that she was represented as rejoicing in drums, cymbals, horn-blowing, and torch-carrying²³⁹. These things were evidently mimetic of thunder and lightning.

As Miss Harrison shows in her book, *Themis*²⁴⁰, there were many things in the early religious life of the Greeks which can be explained only by taking into account the popular association of thunder and rain and fertility.

Belief in a connection between thunder and vegetation is still as hardy and thriving in Europe as is any plant. In Westphalia, for instance, thunder early in the year means a fruitful year. In Swabia, frequent thundering in May signifies a bountiful year. When a troll who heard thunder asked his wife what the noise was she replied: "That is the peasant; he is hauling grain over the bridge"²⁴¹.

Some ancient scientific men believed that thunder had a purifying effect upon water. Hippocrates²⁴² thought that water which fell while it was thundering

²²¹Interesting modern examples are given in *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*, 2. 320.

²²²This word is used in this sense in The Loeb Classical Library translation of Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum* 1.6.5, but it is a 'correction' from *κράνιον*. The same meaning is given for *κεραύνιον* in Liddell and Scott, but their reference to Galen eludes my effort to check it <in ninth edition, 13.969A, in tenth edition, 19.731. C. K.>.

²²³See also Pliny 19.37. ²²⁴664 B-966 D.

²²⁵Plutarch, *Moralia* 664 F.

²²⁶*Ibidem*, 664 B; Juvenal 5.116-118.

²²⁷Plutarch, *Moralia* 664 C.

²²⁸*Ibidem*, 664 C; 912 F-913 A.

²²⁹V. S. Lenn, *Lean's Collectanea: Collections by Vincent Stuckey Lean of Proverbs (English and Foreign), Folk-Lore and Superstitions, also Compilations Towards Dictionaries of Proverbial Phrases and Words, Old and Disused*, 1.405 (Bristol and London, 1902-1904).

²³⁰Plutarch, *Moralia* 664 D-E.

²³¹Apollodorus, as quoted by a scholiast on Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus* 705.

²³²Themis², 175 (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1927).

²³³*Adversus Gentes* 5.32, 34, 35.

²³⁴Georgics 1.331-332.

²³⁵Claudianus, In Eutropium 1.156-162. See the references in Sir James G. Frazer's translation of Apollodorus 1.224-225 (The Loeb Classical Library). ²³⁶See *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.157.

²³⁷Coin Types, 167-168 (Glasgow, J. Maclehose and Sons, 1905).

²³⁸J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, 52 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1910).

²³⁹Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium* 6.

²⁴⁰See, for example, 168, and note 2 (see note 232, above).

²⁴¹These and many other examples of "Donner und Fruchtbarkeit des Feldes" are given in *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*, 2. 318-320. See also "Donner zum Zwecke des Fruchtbarkeitszaubers", *ibidem*, 2. 323-325.

²⁴²*Epidemica* 6.4.17. See also Galen, *Commentarius in Hippocratis Epidemica* 4.19 (see D. C. G. Kuhn's edition of Galen, 17, Part II, 187-189).

was more wholesome than that which fell during a windstorm unaccompanied by thunder. Theophrastus³⁴³ states that in countries where many thunderbolts occur not merely bitter waters but even fountains and entire streams of salt water change their nature.

Of the vegetation struck by lightning, trees, naturally the tall ones³⁴⁴, suffered most. Some of the Aeolians did, indeed, say that scrub-oaks, which are not lofty, were the only oaks hit³⁴⁵, but such a statement would not have won general assent in Greece and Italy. In the First Eclogue of Vergil³⁴⁶ an exile from his native land complains that everywhere there is trouble. He is sick of tending the goats. The twin offspring of one of them had to be left on stony soil. He laments that he had been too stupid to see that oaks struck by lightning had predicted this series of woes³⁴⁷. We read that, when Sulla imposed his proscriptions upon the Romans, great destruction was wrought upon oaks by Jupiter, and that, when anyone sinned against Jupiter, the god would strike an oak³⁴⁸. Servius³⁴⁹ regarded the hitting of the oak as significant because this tree was under the protection of Jupiter.

Modern records, kept for many years, of trees struck by lightning in a forest in which beech trees predominated show that oaks were hit 310 times, Scotch pine 108 times, beech 33 times, and other species a smaller number of times³⁵⁰.

... It is a plausible theory that the reverence which the ancient peoples of Europe paid to the oak, and the connexion which they traced between the tree and their sky-god, were derived from the much greater frequency with which the oak appears to be struck by lightning than any other tree of our European forests³⁵¹.

This hypothesis of Frazer is based upon suggestions and observations of Professor W. Warde Fowler, who, in a chapter of his *Roman Essays and Interpretations*³⁵², presents further data concerning the relative frequency with which various trees are struck. Professor Fowler concludes his discussion of the sky-god as follows: "... If on the very threshold of Roman religious history we find him associated with the oak as Jupiter Feretrius, we have now an explanation which so far seems to cover the facts".

A very plausible theory of the way in which the oak and the Thunderer may have become associated is thus set forth by Frazer³⁵³:

Seeing that fire on earth was regularly kindled by the rubbing of oaken sticks together, he < = early man >

³⁴³As quoted by Athenaeus 42 A.

³⁴⁴Dracontius 5.312; Aristophanes, *Nubes* 402, and scholium ad locum; Claudian, *Epistulae* 1.38-40 *Caelestis flamma...ingentes quercus, annosas fulminat ornos*.

³⁴⁵Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum* 3.8.5. This kind of oak is called *kaliphloros* by Pliny 16.24, who borrows the second part of the name from Theophrastus. Pliny (*ibidem*) says that the frequency with which the tree was hit precluded its use in sacrifices.

³⁴⁶1.17.
³⁴⁷Lydus (47) says that, if lightning strikes a tree, one must ask what kind of tree it was, but I have not been able to find any detailed list of the various omens from the striking of different kinds of trees.

³⁴⁸Iunius Philargyrius on Vergil, *Eclogues* 1.17.

³⁴⁹On Vergil, *Eclogues* 1.17.

³⁵⁰J. R. Harris, *Boanerges*, 302 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1913).

³⁵¹J. G. Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful*, 2.208 (London, Macmillan, 1914), and *The Magic Art*, 2.349-375. The latter passage is devoted to a study of the worship of the oak and of the close connection of this tree with thunder and the Aryan god of the heavens.

³⁵²37-41 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1920). These pages form a chapter called *The Oak and the Thunder God*.

³⁵³Frazer, 2.373-374.

might readily infer that fire in heaven was produced in like manner; in other words, that the flash of lightning was the spark elicited by some one who was lighting his fire in the usual fashion up aloft; for the savage commonly explains natural phenomena by ideas drawn from the circle of his own daily life. Similarly, people who are accustomed to make fire by means of flints suppose that lightning is produced in the same way. This is reported of the Armenians, and it may be inferred of the many peoples who believe that the flint implements of prehistoric races are thunder-bolts.

Thus it is easy to conceive how a god of the oak, viewed as the source of earthly fire, should come to be regarded as a god of the lightning, and hence, by an easy extension of ideas, as a god of thunder and rain.

In the Ozark Mountains

There is a very general belief that black walnut trees are liable to damage by lightning, and it is a hardy hillman indeed who can be persuaded to stand under one during an electrical storm³⁵⁴.

According to an item in our own lore, "Locust trees are more often struck by lightning than any others"³⁵⁵. If we may believe a popular writer on woodcraft, the oak and the ash draw lightning, but one is safe under the birch, cedar, and balsam³⁵⁶. In Europe the hazel beech and elder trees are popularly regarded as immune to damage by lightning³⁵⁷.

Another tree which seems to attract thunderbolts is the elm. Some farmers hold that a few large elm trees growing near farm buildings tend to draw the lightning to themselves and thus save barns and houses³⁵⁸.

One farmer, who has elm trees growing a short distance from his barn, reported that these trees have been struck several times by lightning within the past thirty years. He believed his barn would have been fired had there been no elm trees nearby to draw the bolt away from the buildings. Infrequently in the summer an elm tree near freshly built stacks of grain has been struck by lightning in electrical storms, indicating, this farmer believes, that trees give some protection against loss by fire.

The elm tree has some competition, however, as a protective agent.

Hemlock-trees attract lightning. It is said that you need put no lightning-rods on your buildings if you will only set up a tall hemlock pole near them. The lightning will hit that pole rather than the buildings every time³⁵⁹.

It seems that in Java even human lives are saved by the fondness of lightning for trees³⁶⁰:

Thunder-storms are extremely frequent; but the loss of life from lightning is probably diminished by the fact that the palm-trees are excellent conductors.

As there are thunder birds, so there are thunder plants³⁶¹. Greek vase paintings show the lotus and lotiform designs as thunderbolts in the right hand of Zeus. In Greece representations of the thunderbolt underwent three distinct modifications. In the first place, the petals, after being conventionalized into

³⁵⁴Vance Randolph, *The Ozarks: An American Survival of Primitive Society*, 132 (New York, The Vanguard Press, 1931).

³⁵⁵Thomas 2085.

³⁵⁶Ernest Thompson Seton, 116 (see note 20, above).

³⁵⁷T. F. Thiselton-Dyer, *The Folk-Lore of Plants*, 45. 54 (London, Chatto and Windus, 1899).

³⁵⁸This paragraph is based on a newspaper clipping, from which the following quotation was taken.

³⁵⁹C. Johnson, 69 (see note 35, above).

³⁶⁰The Encyclopaedia Britannica¹⁴, 12. 975, under Java.

³⁶¹See Cook 2.770-778. Interesting modern examples, such as thunder-daisy, are given on page 775.

rays, were soon transformed into naturalistic flames issuing from the floral or quasi-floral calyx. Secondly, the sepals of the calyx developed into wings, and ultimately a second pair of wings was added to balance the first pair. Lastly, the central spike of the lotus acquired a spiral twist²⁶².

In view of such developments one does not hesitate to accept the theory that the lotus flowers painted on the Hekatompedon of Pisistratus were intended, like the eagles represented upon the pediments, to avert thunderbolts²⁶³.

Associations of lightning with vegetation have continued through the ages. Much general lore of this character has been collected in Chapter 4, Lightning Plants, in T. F. Thiselton-Dyer's book, *The Folk-Lore of Plants*²⁶⁴. Still more important are the superstitions and the references given in an article entitled *Blitzbaumholz*, in a recent publication, *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*, I. 1419-1421.

There are many unrelated items of ancient thunder lore about vegetation. The twigs of all trees struck rise straight up in the direction from which the lightning came²⁶⁵. Trees which have been struck can be cured by treatment with myrrh²⁶⁶. The cucumber blossom turns as though terror-stricken as often as it thunders²⁶⁷. Figs fall when it thunders at the Vulcanalia. The remedy lies in surrounding the area of the trees in advance with barley straw²⁶⁸. If a vine is struck, it means that less wine will be produced, but, when a tree is hit, there will be a dearth of fruit²⁶⁹.

The flower of the herb called *Britannica*, gathered and eaten before thunder was heard, made one safe from quinsy for a whole year²⁷⁰. It was a traditional belief that, if one threw his hands behind his back and bit off a piece of wood that had been struck by lightning, and then applied it to an aching tooth, a sure cure would follow²⁷¹. One of our own prescriptions is as follows: "Pick your aching tooth with a splinter from a tree that has been struck by lightning"²⁷².

THUNDERSTONES

There was a widespread belief in antiquity that small animals and many miscellaneous objects fell from the heavens during storms²⁷³. Another prevalent idea was that certain kinds of stones descended amid thunderstorms²⁷⁴. Among them were *ceraunia* and *brontea*, 'thunderstones', and the *ombria*, 'rain-stones'²⁷⁵. The name *ceraunia* was applied to stones of

elongated form. One rare type of such stones, which were never found in any place that had not been struck by lightning, was much in demand for the practice of magic²⁷⁶.

A chaste person carrying the *lapis ceraunius* would never be struck by a thunderbolt, nor would the house or villa in which he might happen to be. One carrying it at sea was safe from bolts and squalls²⁷⁷. Coral could end a drought and avert hail, thunder, wind, and tempest²⁷⁸. The *brontea* was supposed to be able to extinguish fires started by lightning²⁷⁹. In general, stones that fell from the heavens preserved one from strokes of the thunderbolt, protected sailors in storms, and brought pleasant sleep and dreams²⁸⁰.

Naturally stones of such value were searched for and cherished. It was said that river nymphs collected them in caves in the Pyrenees²⁸¹, and we have another reference to the carrying away of such stones from Spain²⁸². German helmets flashed with them²⁸³. Two 'thunderstone gems' (*gemmae cerauniae*) were included among the adornments of a statue of Isis²⁸⁴. Juno's diadem is represented as having been enriched by such stones²⁸⁵. *Ceraunia* were among the favors that accompanied the viands during a ten days' banquet given by Elagabalus²⁸⁶.

About 1081 A. D. a Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, sent to Henry III or IV, Emperor of the West, an *αστροπελέκους δεδεμένος μετὰ χρυσαφίου και ομοβαλ-σάμου*, a 'star-ax', which was evidently girded with gold and balsam in some form²⁸⁷. These words puzzled Gibbon²⁸⁸, who "endeavoured to grope out a tolerable meaning" and called the gift "a radiated crown of gold". Its identification by other scholars as a thunderstone is undoubtedly correct²⁸⁹. In a treatise²⁹⁰ which contains much curious Greek lore about stones I ran across the belief that a man carrying coral *οὐνε ἐπὶ κεραυνοῦ ἢ ἀστέρους πληγήσεται*. I suspect that this contains another reference to a prehistoric stone implement.

Among modern scholars there is a marked tendency, which in general seems thoroughly justified, to regard

²⁷⁶Pliny 37.135.

²⁷⁷Damigeron, *De Lapidibus* 12.

²⁷⁸Orphei *Lithica* 596-607, and pages 149-150 of the accompanying epitome of Orphei *Lithica* in E. Abel's edition of the poem (Berlin, Calvary, 1881); Damigeron 7; Isidorus, *Origines* 16.15.25; Pliny 37.164.

²⁷⁹Pliny 37.150; Isidorus, *Origines* 16.15.24.

²⁸⁰Marbodaeus, *De Lapidibus* 428-445. This work is to be found in a supplement to Abrahami Gorlaei *Dactylithecae*, Part II (Leyden, 1695).

²⁸¹Claudian, *Laus Serenae* 77-78.

²⁸²Apollinaris Sidonius, *Carmina* 7.49-50.

²⁸³Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 470.

²⁸⁴J. K. Orelli, *Inscriptionum Latinarum Selectarum Amplissima Collectio* . . . , No. 2510 (Zurich, 1828).

²⁸⁵Martianus Capella 1.67, 75.

²⁸⁶Lampridius, *Heliogabalus* 21.3.

²⁸⁷Anna Comnena, *Alexias* 3.10 (*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 1839). There is now a papyrus record of an ostrich egg decorated or mounted in some way with silver. See C. C. Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection*, 68 (*University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series*, Volume 24 [1931]). Pausanias (10.24.6) tells how the stone given to Zeus as a substitute for the infant Zeus was wrapped in white wool on festive occasions. The wool was doubtless in the form of fillets.

²⁸⁸E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edited by J. B. Bury, 6.103 (London, Methuen, 1898).

²⁸⁹G. Pinlay, *Παρατηρήσεις ἐπὶ τῆς ἐν Ἑλλάδι καὶ Ἑλλάδι Προϊστορικῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας*, 21 (Athens, 1869); J. Evans, *The Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments, of Great Britain*, 53 (New York, Appleton, 1872). Pages 50-58 contain much material that is pertinent to this paper. I have not seen Pinlay's work.

²⁹⁰Orphei *Lithica*, 149 (see note 278, above).

²⁶²Part of this paragraph is based on Cook 2.776-778, with but slight changes in phraseology. An important work on the form of the thunderbolt is that by Paul Jacobsthal, *Der Blitz in der Orientalischen und Griechischen Kunst* (Berlin, Weidmann, 1906).

²⁶³Salomon Reinach, *Revue Archéologique* 10 (1907), 64-65.

²⁶⁴London, Chatto and Windus, 1889. For an instructive passage see *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*, under Donner, 2.318-320. See also the index to Thomas, under Lightning, Thunder.

²⁶⁵Seneca 2.31.2.

²⁶⁶Democritus, as quoted in *Geoponica* 10.79.

²⁶⁷Palladius 4.9.8. ²⁶⁸Pliny 17.260. ²⁶⁹Lydus 47.

²⁷⁰Pliny 25.21. ²⁷¹Pliny 28.45. ²⁷²Thomas 1412.

²⁷³See THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 24.27.

²⁷⁴See the article *Baetylia*, by P. Lenormant, in *Daremberg et Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, I. 642-647; C. Blinkenberg, *The Thunderweapon in Religion and Folklore*, 1-31, et passim (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1911); T. H. Martin, *La Foudre, l'Électricité, et le Magnétisme chez les Anciens*, 175-178, 195-206 (Paris, Didier, 1866); F. Cogels, *Céraunies et Pierres de Foudre*, *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale d'Archéologie de Belgique* 4 (1907), 1-406. ²⁷⁵Pliny 37.176.

as thunderstones many kinds of stones used in worship and ceremonial. For instance, Professor Gilbert Murray draws the following conclusion from Hesiod's account of the swallowing of the Zeus-stone by Cronos and the acquisition of thunder by Zeus²⁹¹:

... Zeus in this story is a thunder-god. The thunder or lightning is his *mana*. And not only a thunder-god, he is a thunder-stone. The identity has been, of course, disguised in our present version of the myth. It is muddled, like everything else in Hesiod. But it shows through. When Kronos sets about swallowing Zeus, it is the stone he swallows. And it is only when 'by the counsels of Earth' Cronos vomits up the stone that Zeus can take any action; and that action takes the form of thunder and lightning, the special property of a thunder-stone. In the word 'thunder-stone', or *κεραυνόλιθος*, the ancients seem to have mixed, and perhaps confused, two ideas: that of a meteorite, which seemed to be the actual bolt which fell in the thunder, and that of an ordinary flint, nephrite, jade, or the like, which has its mysterious fire inside it. The fire is the soul, or indwelling *mana*, of the flint.

Another example of the tendency to see thunderstones everywhere may be given. In describing Caligula's insane rivalry with Zeus, Dio says²⁹² that he shot stones in retaliation whenever a bolt fell. Even this story has been seized upon as evidence of the existence of thunderstone superstitions in antiquity²⁹³.

Strange to say, other things, such as pieces of wood²⁹⁴, an *ancile*²⁹⁵, and *secures*²⁹⁶ (celts?), are supposed to have fallen along with bolts. Dio²⁹⁷ mentions flying clods, stones, shells, and blood in the same breath with bolts. Forged likenesses of missiles which were supposed to have been used by Zeus in punishing the Iapygians were to be seen a long time after the event²⁹⁸.

One of the Latin scholiasts²⁹⁹ speaks of bolts which had been transformed into stones and which it was the custom to bury. Another writer says³⁰⁰ that fire carried through the air becomes stone on cooling, and that the sulphur found within stones is proof of this. Again, we are told that it is against the nature of water or of a clod of earth to rise from its position, or of fire to descend. Hence the falling of thunderstones from on high is proof of the transformation of fire in the upper regions³⁰¹.

On seeing fire flashing from a stone primitive man would naturally compare it, not to the apparently sluggish fires of the heavens such as stars and sun, but to the flashing fire of the lightning and the bolt³⁰². Classical antiquity fabricated a story to account for the latent fire in stone. Prometheus, closely pursued by Zeus while he was carrying away fire in a reed, dashed the reed against a stone and so entrusted the fire to it³⁰³.

²⁹¹Anthropology and the Classics, edited by R. R. Marett, 86 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1908). See also J. R. Harris, *Boanerges*, 283-284 (see note 250, above); J. E. Harrison, *Themis*, 56-61 (see note 232, above); G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 117 (Munich, Beck, 1912).

²⁹²Dio 59.28.6. The translator in The Loeb Classical Library makes Dio say that Caligula "would in turn hurl a javelin at a rock..." I have seen other translations that could have been improved by a little knowledge of folklore.

²⁹³Blinkenberg, 29-30 (see note 274, above). ²⁹⁴Pausanias 9.12.4. ²⁹⁵Ovid, *Fasti* 3.361-392. The 'shield' may have been a meteoric stone.

²⁹⁶Suetonius, *Caligula* 8. ²⁹⁷40.47.2. ²⁹⁸Athenaeus 523 A-B.

²⁹⁹On Persius 2.26. ³⁰⁰Nemesius, *De Natura Hominum* 5.12.

³⁰¹Joannes Philoponus, *De Aeternitate Mundi* 10.3.

³⁰²See E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 2.262 (New York, Putnam's, 1920).

³⁰³Probus on Vergil, *Eclogues* 6.42.

It seems worth while to repeat here part of a paragraph already quoted from Frazer (see the quotation that follows the mark for note 253):

... people who are accustomed to make fire by means of flints sometimes suppose that lightning is produced in the same way. This is reported of the Armenians, and it may be inferred of the many peoples who believe that flint implements of prehistoric races are thunderbolts.

In modern Europe the belief is still common that belemnites and fossil sea-urchins, which are popularly called 'thunderstones', fall during thunderstorms. They are supposed to be able to afford protection against lightning both to person and to property³⁰⁴. The adjective 'elongated', as applied by the ancients to the *ceraunia*, describes the belemnite equally well. There is evidence which indicates that superstitions about belemnites have an unbroken tradition from antiquity³⁰⁵.

Shakespeare has several interesting references to thunderstones:

Are there no stones in heaven
But what serve for the thunder?³⁰⁶

And, thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone³⁰⁷.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone³⁰⁸.

In northeastern Scotland

... Flint arrows and spear-heads went by the name of "faery dairts," whilst the kelts were called "thunderbolts," and were coveted as the sure bringers of success, provided they were not allowed to fall to the ground. When an animal died suddenly the canny woman of the district was sent for to search for the "faery dairt," and in due course she found one, to the great satisfaction of the owner of the dead animal³⁰⁹.

A curious piece of negro lore is to be found in Julia Peterkin's story, *Black April*³¹⁰:

As a fearful crash shook the earth, Big Sue opened the back door and peeped out and quavered, "Git up, Breeze! Lightnin' is struck dat big pine yonder, close to April's house! It's afire! Dat bolt shaken de whole earth. I bet April'll find it. Lawd! E's been diggin' at de roots o' struck trees to git a bolt a long time! An' now one mighty nigh hit him!"

"What's a bolt, Cun Big Sue?"

The wind howled as she answered, "Why, son, a thunder bolt is a' iron rod. If you finds one, you'll have de power to rule life an' death!"³¹¹

After thunderstones had been endowed with the power of averting thunder, it was almost inevitable that thunderbolts themselves should be supposed to have similar qualities. Perhaps this was the reason why bolts were sometimes sculptured on the entablatures of temples³¹²; since the eagle, which carried thunderbolts, was sculptured on temples to avert

³⁰⁴Blinkenberg, 76-83 (see note 274, above).

³⁰⁵See E. S. McCartney, *On Fossil Thunderstones and Finger-stones*, *The Classical Journal* 18 (1923), 425-426.

³⁰⁶Othello 5.2. 234-235. ³⁰⁷Julius Caesar 1.3. 48-49.

³⁰⁸Cymbeline 4.2. 270-271.

³⁰⁹W. Gregor, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland*, 184 (London, Published for the Folk-Lore Society, 1881).

³¹⁰260-261 (<New York>, Grosset and Dunlap, 1927).

³¹¹Other valuable references to thunderstones are to be found in H. Balfour, *Concerning Thunderbolts*, *Folk-Lore* 40 (1929), 37-49; *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*, 1. 1413-1414, 1419, 1422-1423, 2.325-331.

³¹²Vitruvius 4.3.6.

lightning, representations of bolts may have served the same purpose²¹².

LAPIS MANALIS

Outside the Porta Capena of Rome there was kept a *lapis manalis*, which was escorted into the city with proper ceremonies whenever the Romans wished to end a drought²¹⁴. The suggestion has been made that the stone may have been a primitive representation of the thunder-wagon²¹⁵. There is an ancient statement, however, that *lapides manales* were stones in the form of cylinders²¹⁶, evidently for convenience in dragging them about the bounds of a site.

As we shall see, an attempt has been made to associate the weather properties of the *lapis manalis* with the *manes*²¹⁷. The most recent theory suggests that the *lapis manalis* was an aërolite and notes that stones which fell from heaven were much honored in antiquity²¹⁸.

DEATH AND STORMS

Storms, like comets, are frequently associated with death. Near Britain there were some desolate islands where demons and demigods were said to dwell. The inhabitants accounted for tempestuous weather by saying that one of these beings had died. The people compared them to lamps, which, while lighted, offend nobody with their scent, but, on being extinguished, annoy everybody with the odor which they send forth²¹⁹.

In classical lore it was the general belief, however, that death was portended by bolts and thunderstorms or else took place while Nature was in an angry mood. Oedipus regarded repeated claps of thunder and the numerous bolts flashing from the invincible hand of Zeus as sure signs of his approaching death²²⁰. On the Athenian retreat from Syracuse heavy thunderstorms, though seasonal, were looked upon by the invaders as omens of their destruction²²¹.

Prior to the death of Cicero vast numbers of bolts had fallen, some of which descended upon the shrine of Capitoline Jupiter²²². When Antony proposed some astonishing laws, the heavens were filled with peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, but Antony, though an augur, regarded them as of no significance and so brought the many calamities of civil war upon the city and the world²²³.

The death of Claudius seemed to have been in-

dicated, says Dio, by a number of omens, among which was a thunderbolt that struck the standards of the pretorian soldiers²²⁴. It was an ominous portent when a bolt, like a harpy snatching food, consumed the dinner of Nero as it was being brought to him²²⁵.

In 217 A. D. 'the hunting theater' (i. e. the Colosseum) was struck with bolts on the very day of the Vulcanalia and a disastrous blaze ensued, so that Macrinus had sufficient warning that he would not long survive²²⁶. In 375 A. D. there was a terrific clap of thunder and a bolt set fire to part of the palace, *curia*, and forum at Sirmium, dooming Valentinian to death²²⁷.

While he was campaigning beyond Ctesiphon, the Emperor Carus died of disease or was murdered during a thunderstorm. So common had the fashion become of ascribing the deaths of great men to lightning that such a report spread about Carus's death, as is attested by several authors²²⁸. It was explained that the fate of Carus was just, since an oracle had shown that Roman arms could go victoriously only as far as Ctesiphon²²⁹.

The early history of Rome provides several examples. Romulus Silvius²³⁰ and Numa²³¹ perished by thunderbolts. One version of the death of Tullus Hostilius says that he was murdered by Ancus Martius during a violent storm²³². There is a tradition that the death of St. Simeon Stylites was due to a thunderbolt²³³.

It is surprising how frequently translation to heaven was accompanied by storms. Thunderbolts ignited and consumed the funeral pyre of Hercules²³⁴. Iolaus and his companions went to gather up the bones, but found none at all. They believed that, in accordance with the oracles, Hercules had been translated to the gods²³⁵. The final wonder that attended the birth of Dionysus was the ascent of his mother to heaven²³⁶.

Maddened by the loss of her daughter Selene, Basilea played wildly upon a timbrel and a cymbal and became a terror to spectators. When some of them attempted to seize her, a terrible rainstorm arose, accompanied by steady falling of bolts, and she was never seen again. Persuaded that she had become a goddess, the people built altars and made sacrifices to her and even instituted other divine rites and ceremonies in her honor²³⁷.

According to some accounts, both Aeneas²³⁸ and Romulus²³⁹ were translated during severe thunderstorms.

The most interesting illustration outside classical lands is that of Zoroaster, who claimed the power of

²¹²S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, 3.73-74 (Paris, E. Leroux, 1908).

²¹³See M. H. Morgan, *Greek and Roman Rain-Gods and Rain-Charms*, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 32 (1901), 83-109.

²¹⁴H. Usener, *Rheinisches Museum* 60 (1905), 19, note 1 (the suggestion was made in the course of an article entitled *Keraunos*, which covers pages 1-30). See also Preller-Jordan, *Römische Mythologie*, 1.354-355 (Berlin, Weidmann, 1881); O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 776, note 2 (Munich, Beck, 1906); Frazer 1.310.

²¹⁵Fabius Plancius Fulgentius, *De Prisco Sermones*, under *Manales Lapides*.

²¹⁶See the text connected with note 341, below.

²¹⁷Fiedler 65-70. ²¹⁸Plutarch, *Moralia* 410 E-F.

²¹⁹Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus* 1510-1515. Compare 1604-1609.

²²⁰Thucydides 7.79.2-3.

²²¹Dio 45.17.2-4. It is recorded that the death of Severus was indicated when his statue was struck by a bolt: see Dio Cassius 77.11.2, in *The Loeb Classical Library* 9.261, 263, which = Xiphilinus 321.20-24, in the edition of R. Stephanus.

²²²Dio 45.27.2-5.

²²³60.35. ²²⁴Dio 61.16.5.

²²⁵Dio 79.25.1-2. ²²⁶Ammianus Marcellinus 30.5.16.

²²⁷Vopiscus, *Carus* 8.2-5; Eutropius 9.18; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 38, *Epitome* 38; Georgius Syncellus, *Chronographia*, page 724 (*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*); Zonaras, *Annales* 12.30.

²²⁸Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 38.3-4. ²²⁹Livy 1.3.9.

²³⁰Plutarch, *Numa* 22.7.

²³¹Dionysius 3.35.4. Compare Zonaras, *Annales* 7.6.

²³²Joannes Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, Chapter 57 (*Migne, Patrologia Graeca* 87, Part III, 2911); *Patrologia Latina* 74.147.

²³³The funeral pyre is called the *thesaurus* of Zeus by Euripides, *Supplices* 1010-1011.

²³⁴Diodorus 4.38.4-5. ²³⁵Philostratus, *Imagines* 1.14.

²³⁶Diodorus 1.57.7-8.

²³⁷Aurelius Victor, *Origo Gentis Romanae* 14.2.

²³⁸Plutarch, *Romulus* 27.6-7; Livy 1.16.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.52.2 (compare 63.3); Ovid, *Fasti* 2.492-496; Zonaras, *Annales* 7.4.

luring down sparks from the stars. He prayed that he might be destroyed by lightning, a fate which is said actually to have befallen him. There is a tradition that he was carried to heaven by a bolt and was made a star³⁴⁰.

It is in a more or less casual manner that a number of my sources, especially those of late date, mention death by a bolt or during a storm; in some works the statements about bolts and storms are introduced only after longer and more trustworthy accounts have been given. This point is important, since it shows how firmly fixed was the tradition that people died during storms. Death at such a time was not unlike going out with the tide.

It seems that the spirits of the dead could cause rain or be invoked to send it. A recent investigator³⁴¹ comes to the conclusion that the *lapis manalis* which the Romans escorted into the city when there was urgent need of rain had nothing to do with Jupiter, but was in some way connected with the *manes*. He ransacks folklore literature and finds many illustrations of a belief in the ability of the dead to affect the weather. It may not be amiss to note in this connection that, according to peasants of Mauretania, when any part of the grave of Antaeus was dug out, rain began to fall and continued until the earth was replaced³⁴².

In the celebrated calling down of Jupiter from heaven by Numa, the god said that Numa must charm thunder and lightning with 'heads', a prescription which Numa managed to turn aside from men by verbal subtlety³⁴³. This suggests another remarkable tale of a head in weather lore. After the Battle of Philippi Antony buried the body of Brutus, except the head, which was to be sent to Rome. During the voyage from Dyrrachium across the Adriatic the ships encountered a storm, and the head was thrown into the sea³⁴⁴. Doubtless the head was intended to appease the storm, since sacrifices were made to the sea when expeditions were ready to set out from shore³⁴⁵. It was the custom of the Saxons, on setting out from an enemy's coast on the homeward journey, to sacrifice every tenth captive to the waters³⁴⁶. It is possible, however, that the head of Brutus may have been looked upon as bringing bad luck³⁴⁷.

In parts of our own country it is believed that

³⁴⁰Clemens Romanus, *Recognitiones* 4.27-28 (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 1.1327). According to some accounts, Zoroaster, when he was near death, urged the Persians to guard his ashes, because on their preservation would depend the safety of the kingdom. See Chronicon Pascale, 1.67 (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae), and Michael Glycas, *Annalium Pars II* (*ibidem*, 243, 244); Suidas, under *Zwopodotrys*.

³⁴¹E. Samter, *Altrömischer Regenzauber*, *Archiv Für Religionswissenschaft* 21 (1922), 317-339, especially 331-339.

³⁴²Pomponius Mela 3.10. On the general subject of rain and the dead see Fiedler 58-59.

³⁴³Plutarch, *Numa* 15. See also Ovid, *Fasti* 3.339-341, and THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.163.

³⁴⁴Dio 47.40.2. For an interesting passage on calming the troubled waters of the Adriatic Sea, *vorago navigantium*, with a nail supposed to have come from the wood of the true cross see Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Martyrum* 1.6 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 71.710).

³⁴⁵See, for example, Livy 29.27.5; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.51. Compare Vergil, *Aeneid* 5.814-815 *Unus erit tantum amissum quem gurgite quaeres: unum pro multis dabitur caput*.

³⁴⁶Sidonius 8.0.15.

³⁴⁷Plutarch (Cato the Younger 15.4) tells how Cato had a perilous voyage from Asia to Brundisium after taking the ashes of Caepio on board his own ship, whereas the other vessels made the trip with little trouble.

"There will always be a storm after the death of an old woman"³⁴⁸. A writer of a sea story that was popular a few years ago says³⁴⁹: "An old sailor taught me that thunder was the growling curse of a dead sea captain who had lost his course; the blinding flashes of lightning were the combined sparkles of bar-maid's eyes luring seamen to a pleasant harbor..."

A superstition in Brittany is that the death of usurers or of rich people who have been harsh toward the poor is always followed by furious thunderstorms or by lightning. The raging elements do not subside so long as the corpse remains in the house³⁵⁰.

A superstition prevails among the lower classes of many parts of Worcestershire, that when storms, heavy rains, or other elemental strifes, take place at the death of a great man, the spirit of the storm will not be appeased till the moment of burial. This superstition gained great strength on the occasion of the Duke of Wellington's funeral, when, after some weeks of heavy rain, and one of the highest floods ever known in this country, the skies began to clear, and both rain and flood abated. The storms which have been noticed to take place at the time of the death of many great men known to our history, may have had something to do with the formation of this curious notion in the minds of the vulgar. It was a common observation hereabout in the week before the interment of his Grace, "Oh, the rain won't give over till the Duke is buried"³⁵¹.

In England a high wind used to be regarded as an omen of the death of a distinguished person, as we may see from an entry in Pepys's Diary³⁵²:

Waked with a very high wind, and said to my wife, "I pray God I hear not of the death of any great person, this wind is so high!" fearing that the Queen might be dead.

At the present time there is a saying that "Winter thunder is to old folks death, and to young folks plunder"³⁵³. The current superstition that "Thunder after a funeral shows that the spirit of the deceased has gone to heaven"³⁵⁴ reminds one of ancient stories about translation during thunderstorms.

SPIRITS AND DEMONS AS CAUSES OF BAD WEATHER

Another source of storms and of bad weather in general lay in spirits and demons, which inhabited the air above the earth³⁵⁵. Such ideas have a long ancestry; in distant Chaldea, it was said, thunderings were the voices of aerial powers and lightnings their running³⁵⁶. Even the Pythagoreans believed that such phenomena were caused by spirits, which they assigned to the space between heaven and earth³⁵⁷.

References to weather activities of demons become

³⁴⁸Journal of American Folk-Lore 40 (1927), 187. Compare *ibidem*, 196, "When an old person dies there is always a change in the weather".

³⁴⁹Joan Lowell, *The Cradle of the Deep*, 10 (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1929).

³⁵⁰P. Sébillot, *Le Folk-Lore de France*, 1.72 (Paris, E. Guilmoto, 1904-1907).

³⁵¹The Gentleman's Magazine 205 (1858), Part II, page 375. For the association of storms with the deaths of famous persons see V. S. Lean's *Collectanea*, 2.588, 580 (see note 229, above). See also *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 3 (1904), 116; *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 15 (1883), 120-121.

³⁵²Entry for October 9, 1663.

³⁵³D.80. ³⁵⁴Thomas 782.

³⁵⁵See G. L. Hamilton, *Storm-Making Springs: Rings of Invisibility and Protection. Studies on the Sources of the Yvain of Chrétien de Troies*, *Romanic Review* 5 (1914), 213-237, especially 226-227.

³⁵⁶Lydus 21. ³⁵⁷*ibidem*.

rather frequent in Christian literature³⁵⁵. With the utmost assurance Clemens Alexandrinus³⁵⁶ says that hail and storms in general arise not merely from a disturbance of the elements, but also from the wrath of demons and angels that are not good. There is an interesting record of an attempt to discredit the account of the divine use of the weather to aid the 'Thundering Legion' in its battle with the Quadi. A story was circulated to the effect that a certain Arnuphis, an Egyptian magician, had employed magic arts to call upon demons and that they had sent the rain for the legionaries³⁵⁷.

Perhaps it was an effort to combat the very common belief in demonic weather agents that caused some Christians to say that thunder was the preaching of saints who, with loud tones, dinned in the ears of the faithful the means by which the world, having been warned, could be brought to recognize its sins³⁵⁸.

STORM-MAKING OBJECTS

Many objects were supposed to possess the power of arousing storms³⁵⁹. In the Iliad³⁶⁰ Zeus employs his tasseled aegis to cover Mount Ida with clouds. Then he lightens and thunders. According to one ancient scholar³⁶¹, Zeus received the aegis to stir up the clouds and the thunder above us. With the problem whether the aegis was a goat skin or a personification of the storm cloud I am not much concerned³⁶².

The lock of the Gorgon's hair was a somewhat similar device. The view has been expressed that it was a talisman which, when exposed to view, brought on a storm of thunder and lightning to strike panic into a foe³⁶³.

Much lore of a somewhat similar character can be found in classical handbooks on religion and mythology³⁶⁷.

WAYS OF AVERTING THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AND THEIR ILL EFFECTS

Thunder was regarded as friendly to man to the extent that it was looked upon as a necessary antecedent to beneficial rain. In fact, one of the stereotyped ways to induce rain was to make a noise like thunder³⁶⁸, but thunder and thunderbolts may be inconsiderately violent, and hence man has sometimes tried to find means of averting them. Examples of supposed prophylactics against these phenomena have been given

in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. They consist of animals or parts of them (16.7)³⁶⁹, plants (17.108)³⁷⁰, charms, especially stones (18.163), and sacrifice (18.155).

By the principle of homeopathic magic noises, too, seem to have been effective against the rumbling thunder. Euripides³⁷¹ represents Cyclops as saying that he does not fear the weapons of Zeus and as making a din to outdo that of Zeus. According to a theory offered by Sir James G. Frazer³⁷², the noise made by the gong at Dodona was "meant to mimic the thunder that might so often be heard rolling and rumbling in the coombs of the stern and barren mountains which shut in the gloomy valley"³⁷³. Since thunderstorms were frequent at Dodona³⁷⁴, perhaps too frequent, it is not impossible that the striking of the gong was intended to keep them away, especially if there were demons of thunder³⁷⁵, as there undoubtedly were demons of the weather in general. Brazen instruments were struck during eclipses, presumably in an effort to frighten away the monster that was devouring the sun or the moon³⁷⁶.

Another sound to be associated with such lore is that made by the lips when lightning occurred³⁷⁷. Pliny³⁷⁸ thinks that this method of greeting lightning, which was in general use among ancient nations, was a form of worship, but it is more probable that the sounds were apotropaic. "The reason for the custom was explained by the Pythagoreans³⁷⁹ to be, that by acting thus one frightened the spirits in Tartarus, who were doubtless supposed to make the thunder and lightning"³⁸⁰. A more recent suggestion is that the sounds were meant to avert the danger of being struck by lightning³⁸¹.

The Pythagoreans made some other kind of noise to accompany the cheeping or the smacking of the lips³⁸², but we are not informed what it was³⁸³.

In medieval times, when it was a prevalent belief

³⁵⁹There is some material on this subject in the present paper under the caption Thunder and Animal Life. For another mention of the use of the sealskin to provide protection against the thunderbolt see F. de Mély, *Les Lapidaires de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, 41 (Paris, E. Leroux, 1878).

³⁷⁷See also the caption Thunder and Vegetation in the present paper, and E. S. McCartney, *Why Did Tiberius Wear Laurel in the Form of a Crown during Thunderstorms?*, *Classical Philology* 24 (1929), 201-203.

³⁷⁸Cyclops 320-328. Dio (50.28.6) tells us that Caligula had a device by which he tried to match thunder with thunder and lightning with lightning.

³⁷⁹Stage thunder was likewise created by means of bronze, i. e. a bronze vessel, according to the scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds* 292.

³⁸⁰See note 137, above.

³⁸¹It is clear from Theocritus 2.36 that gongs were struck to keep off evil spirits. See also Porphyrius, *Vita Pythagorae* 41. In an article by A. B. Cook, *The Gong at Dodona*, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 22 (1902), 5-28, it is suggested that the gong at Dodona was struck to ward off evil influences. The scholiast Q on Homer, *Odyssey* 11.48 explains that it was a common belief that demons feared iron.

³⁸²See K. F. Smith, *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus*, Edited, etc., 347-348 (New York, American Book Company, 1913).

³⁸³Pliny 28.25; Aristophanes, *Vespae* 626, and a scholium on the verse.

³⁷⁰Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora* 2.10 (11.8). I was much surprised to find part of this passage rendered as follows in the Oxford translation of Aristotle, edited by W. D. Ross: "...if thunder be a hiss and roar necessarily produced by the quenching of fire, and also designed, as the Pythagoreans say, for a threat to terrify those that lie in Tartarus". If this translation is correct, many writers on religion and folklore are wrong. See note 292, above.

³⁷¹G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore* 1 (1890), 153. Compare Ernst Riess, in the article on *Aberglaube* in Pauly-Wissowa, 1.43: "...So wird man im *poppysmus* wohl einen religiösen Brauch sehen dürfen des Sinnes, dass der Mensch dem Gott im Kampf hilft".

³⁷²Cook 2.827.

³⁷³Aristotle, as cited in note 379, above.

³⁷⁴On the apotropaic use of noises, especially in weather lore, see Fiedler 28-31.

³⁵⁵See pages 226-227 of the article cited in note 355, above, and also a section on Diabolic Agencies in Storms, in Andrew D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 1.336-350 (New York, Appleton, 1896). For specific references see Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 22-23; Bonaventura, *Compendium Theologiae Veritatis* 2.20; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.80.2.

³⁵⁶Stromata 6.3.

³⁵⁷Dio 72.8.4 (The Loeb Classical Library 9.28).

³⁵⁸Isidorus, *De Natura Rerum* 29.2.

³⁵⁹See THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.164 (under Local Phenomena), 24.28 (under Caves), and also the article named in note 355, above.

³⁶⁰17.593-595. See also Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.352-354; Silius Italicus 12.719-724.

³⁶¹Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium* 9.

³⁶²See Roscher, under *Aegis*, 1.150; Pauly-Wissowa, under *Aegis*, 1.971; Fiedler 49-50.

³⁶³W. H. Roscher, *Die Gorgonen und Verwandtes*, 80 (Leipzig, Teubner, 1879).

³⁶⁴See, for example, Roscher, under *Graiai*, 1.1731-1732, 1737, and under *Athene*, 1.676-678; O. Gruppe, 2.818-848, *passim* (see note 315, above); Fiedler, *passim*.

³⁶⁵The case of Salmoeneus is cited in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.157.

that evil spirits stirred up foul weather, bells were used to keep them away or to put them to flight³⁸⁴. An inscription on a bell in Switzerland reads: *A fulgure grandine et tempestate libera nos domine Jesu Christe*³⁸⁵.

The views of the Middle Ages with respect to supernatural storms have been well summed up as follows³⁸⁶:

"It is," says Thomas Aquinas, "a dogma of faith that the demons can produce wind, storms, and rain of fire from heaven. The atmosphere is a battle-field between angels and devils. The latter work the constant injury of man; the former his melioration; and the consequence is that changeableness of weather which threatens to frustrate the hopes of industry. And when Lucifer is able to bestow even upon man—on sorcerers and wizards—the power to destroy the fields, the vineyards and dwellings of man by rain, hail and lightning, is it to be wondered at if the Church, which is man's protection against the devil, and whose especial calling it is to fight him, should in this sphere also be his counterpoise, and should seek from the treasury of its divine power, means adequate to frustrate his atmospheric mischiefs? To these means belong the church bells, provided they have been duly consecrated and baptized. The aspiring steeples around which cluster the low dwellings of men, are to be likened, when the bells in them are ringing, to the hen spreading its protecting wings over its chickens; for the tones of the consecrated metal repel the demons and avert storm and lightning."

An interesting Scotch method of averting by means of noise the evil effects of thunder may be cited in this connection³⁸⁷:

During thunder it was not unusual for boys to take a piece of thin wood a few inches wide and about half-a-foot long, bore a hole in one end of it, and tie a few yards of twine into the hole. The piece of wood was rapidly whirled round the head, under the belief that the thunder would cease, or that the thunderbolt would not strike. It went by the name of "thunder-spell"³⁸⁸.

There are other curious ways of escaping the menaces of thunder. "When the Esthonians hear thunder for the first time in the year, they strike their heads thrice with a stone, as a charm against its evil effects"³⁸⁹.

One of the prescriptions from our own lore is as

³⁸⁴E. Stemplinger, *Antiker Aberglaube in Modernen Ausstrahlungen*, 86 (Leipzig, Dieterich, 1922). See also *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens*, 1.1417-1418; E. Hirsch, *Glocke als Wetterzauber beim Friedberger Judenbad von 1260, in Cimbria, Beiträge zur Geschichte, Altertumskunde, Kunst und Erziehungslehre*, . . . 95-103 (Dortmund, Ruhfus, 1926). This book is rare in this country; there is a copy, however, in the New York Public Library).

³⁸⁵Stemplinger (see note 384).

³⁸⁶Viktor Rydberg, *The Magic of the Middle Ages*, translated from the Swedish by A. H. Edgren, 73-74 (New York, Holt, 1879).

³⁸⁷W. Gregor, 153 (see note 309, above).

³⁸⁸The ancients had bull-roarers to imitate thunder, but I can cite no example of their use to repel thunder. See J. E. Harrison, 61-62 (see note 232, above).

³⁸⁹C. Swainson, *A Handbook of Weather Folk-Lore*, 215 (Edinburgh and London, W. Blackwood and Sons, 1873).

follows: "When there is lightning make the sign of the cross and you will not be struck by it"³⁹⁰.

In antiquity words too might be used in averting thunderbolts. The *Geoponica*³⁹¹ recommends resorting to prayer to ward off earthquakes and bolts. The old Tuscan incantation, *arse verse*, 'avert fire'³⁹², was doubtless intended to help save thatched huts from fire from heaven, although the danger of fire from within was far greater.

Another method of contending with the elements was violence³⁹³. Heracles aimed an arrow at the sun because its heat made him uncomfortable³⁹⁴. Herodotus³⁹⁵ says that the Getae menaced their god by shooting arrows against both thunder and lightning. Their practice is paralleled by a custom among the Ogillalah Indians³⁹⁶:

Whenever a storm which they wished to avert was threatening, the thunder-fighters would take their bows and arrows, their guns, their magic drum, and a sort of whistle, made out of the wing-bone of the war-eagle, and, thus equipped, run out and fire at the rising cloud, whooping, yelling, whistling, and beating their drum, to frighten it down again.

The Greek habit of putting out fires during thunderstorms³⁹⁷, which is paralleled among the Germans, has been explained as due to a wish to "avoid attracting the attention of the thunder demons"³⁹⁸. In modern lore, too, fire is supposed to attract the fire of lightning. Mark Twain makes literary use of this belief in a short story called *Mrs. McWilliams and the Lightning*³⁹⁹. When her husband disregards all common sense precautions against attracting lightning, Mrs. McWilliams's temper breaks forth:

What are you doing?—lighting a match at such a time as this! Are you stark mad?"

"Hang it, woman, where's the harm? The place is as dark as the inside of an infidel, and—"

"Put it out! put it out instantly! Are you determined to sacrifice us all? You *know* there is nothing attracts lightning like a light. [Fzt!—crash! boom—bloom—boom—boom!] Oh, just hear it! Now you see what you've done."

(To be continued)

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³⁹⁰Journal of American Folk-Lore 40 (1927), 188, No. 1046.
³⁹¹1.12.37. ³⁹²Pestus 17 (Lindsay).

³⁹³See THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.165-166, and Fiedler 31-33.

³⁹⁴Apollodorus 2.5.10. ³⁹⁵Herodotus 4.94.

³⁹⁶F. Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*, 176 (in the edition by W. E. Leonard [Boston, Ginn, 1910]).

³⁹⁷Aristotle, as cited in note 379, above.

³⁹⁸J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore* 1 (1890), 153. See also Fiedler 55.

³⁹⁹In *The American Claimant and Other Stories and Sketches*, 301 (in volume 21 of the Hillcrest Edition of Mark Twain's works [Hartford, The American Publishing Company, 1903]). Among the things that Mrs. McWilliams thinks dangerous during a storm are lying in bed, standing by a fireplace or a window, and putting on woollen clothes. Compare, however, *The Folk-Lorist* 1 (1892), 68, "A feather bed will keep the lightning away".

✧ ✧ ✧ *To the teacher who knows
a good textbook when she sees it*

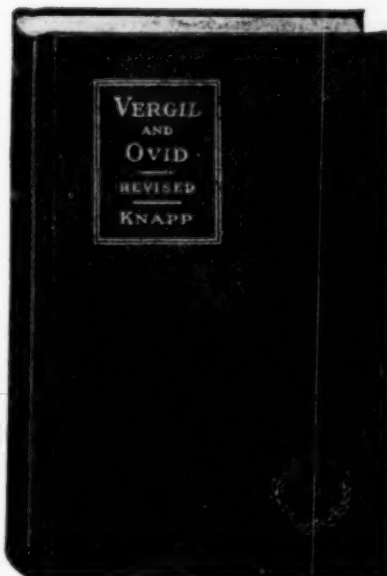
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